No. 820
Friday
21 May '93

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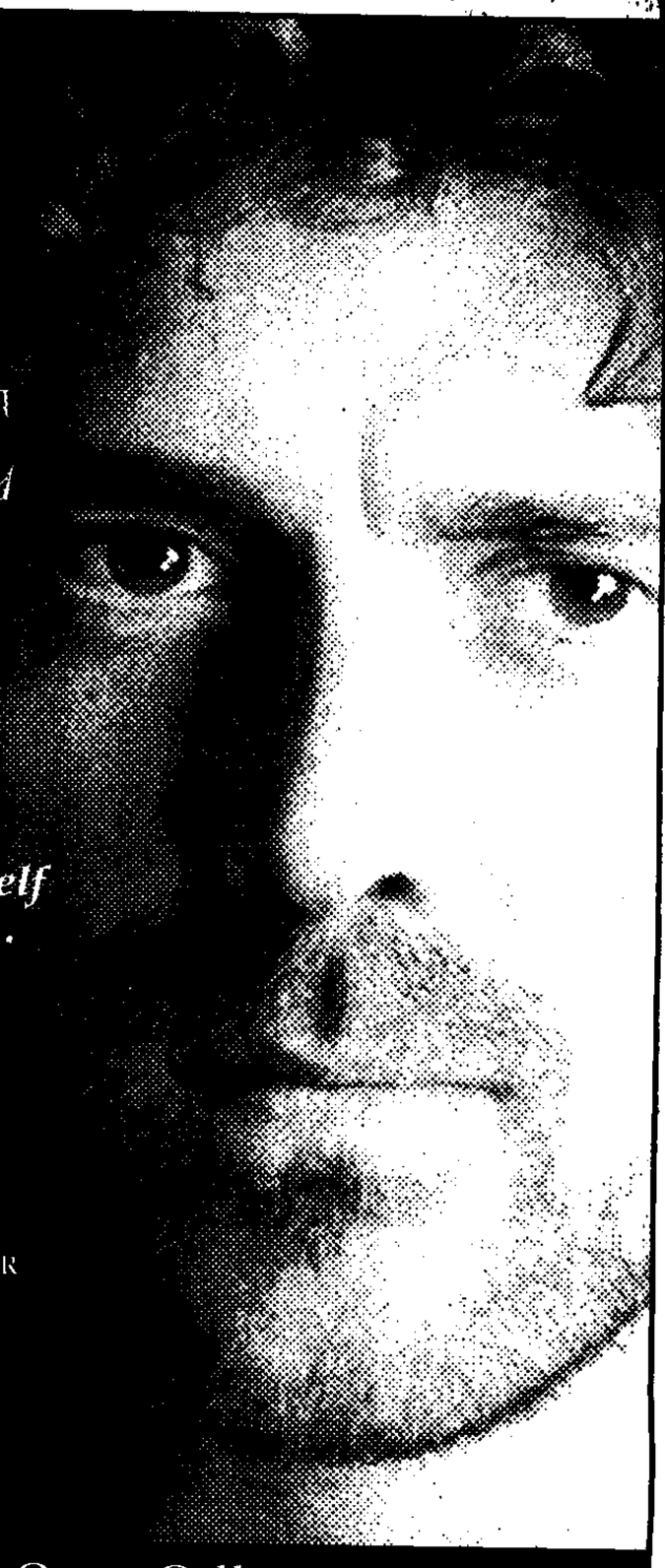

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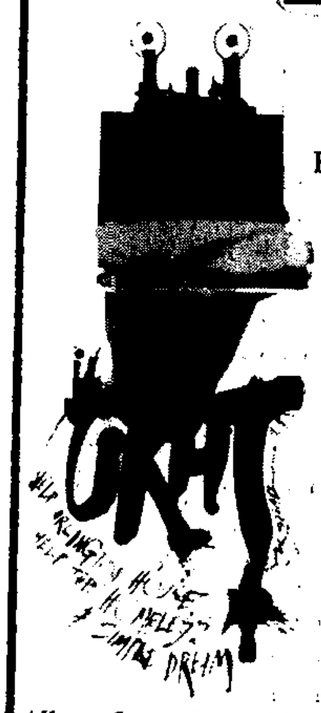

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Gnome

Statement

LORD GNOME is to resume his duties as Chairman and Chief Executive of Gnome International Holdings (Red Heron) plc after a year's sabbatical staying as the guest of Her Majesty the Queen.

The shareholders of the Red Heron Group are delighted to announce in very small print in their annual report that they have been able to contribute £1.5 million to discharge Lord Gnomeson's outstanding debt to the Clerk of the High Court.

They are even more delighted to be able to welcome Lord Gnome back to full control of the petrol-to-prison conglomerate that he ran so brilliantly for many years before his temporary secondment to Trust House Ford open prison, where he acted as Executive Consultant to the Mailbag Construction Division.

The shareholders are particularly pleased to learn that they have offered Lord Gerald (and his charming wife and daughters) a modest honorarium of £2 billion, with performance-related bonuses of a further £10 billion.

The shareholders are over the moon to find out by reading the *Daily Telegraph* that Lord Gerry will be granted a life pension by the Red-Handed Group of a sum equal to double the annual turnover of the aforementioned group, to be payable to his family in perpetuity.

The shareholders are confident that they can look forward to a bright future for their Chairman and a pretty bleak one for themselves.

E. Strobes
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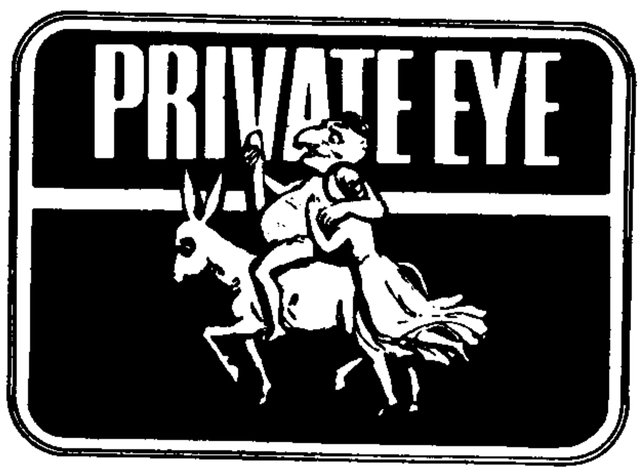


COLOUR SECTION

ENCOURAGED by John Major's disastrous "give over" speech in Scotland last week, the battle lines for the succession are now clearly drawn: between Michael Heseltine (see last *Eye*) and Kenneth Clarke.

Home secretary Clarke set down his marker with a rumbustious defence of his humiliating U-turn on unit fines. He delighted all sides of the Commons when he advised Robert Maclennan, the Liberal Democrat's home affairs spokesman, to take some tablets and go and lie down in a darkened room.

This rational approach to problems of crime and punishment had the Tory faithful shouting with joy. But it did not go down so well at the home office, where the U-turn was greeted with profound dismay.

The unit fine system was introduced after long research under *three* home secretaries, though only one minister of state — John Patten. The aim was to try to do something about the large number of unemployed people who are jailed for not paying fines. As they have not the slightest hope of paying them they are a permanent drag on the prison service and the taxpayer.

The solution, then, was to try to relate the fines to the ability to pay. Controlled experiments were set up as early as 1988 in four magistrates' courts — Basingstoke, Bradford, Swansea and Teesside — where the amount collected in fines rose steeply and the number of people who went to prison for not paying decreased dramatically. In the first year of the unit fine system at Basingstoke, the cash total of fines imposed rose 12.5 per cent, and there was a 33 per cent reduction in the number of people jailed for default. At Bradford, arrears notices fell by 45 per cent and committals to prison 24 per cent.

The home office was so impressed it persuaded Patten and Co to put the new system into the criminal justice act. The new system worked perfectly well. Fewer people went to prison and more fines were paid. Of course higher fines were levied on richer people — and they got very angry about it.

A brave home secretary, if ever there has been such a thing, would have stood up for his department and his research, and for not imprisoning thousands of unemployed people because they can't pay fines. But Clarke, who like all bullies is also a coward, opted for the easy course and covered his pathetic retreat with a rip-roaring appeal to the hangers and floggers behind him.

Of such stuff are prime ministers made...

LAST WEEK'S shenanigans over Charles and Diana had less to do with any genuine news than with the desperate ambition of Fleet Street hacks to swell their bank accounts.

Ever since Andrew Morton made a million out of *Diana: Her True Story*, envious rivals have been hoping for a similar windfall by dashing off books which they can then sell to their own newspapers for serialisation: hence this week's plethora of "exclusive extracts" from rubbishy books by A N Wislon in the *Evening Standard*, Nigel Dempster in the *Daily Mail* and James Whitaker in the *Daily Mirror*.

One might think that these papers would jib at having to pay twice over for articles which their hacks should have written for them anyway. Dempster, for instance, claimed in the *Mail* this week that for 12 years, while the world was mesmerised by the fairytale marriage of Chas and Di, "my friends in the royal family were telling me a different story, the extraordinary details of which I can only now reveal." To which his editor, Paul Dacre, might have replied: Why didn't you reveal it in your column at the time, instead of saving it up for your book? But Fleet Street moves in a mysterious way. Far from being reprimanded, the shameless Dumpster has been handed a large cheque.

Similarly, James "Fat Tomato" Whitaker's bosses apparently had no objection to the fact that he kept his bugging "scoop" for a book rather than offering it to the *Mirror* straight away. His only crime was to prevent the book leaking to the *Sun*: it was for this that he was deprived of the £65,000 serial fee which the *Mirror* was going to pay him.

Not that he needs the money. Whitaker openly boasts that he doubles his salary (£70,000 a year plus £300 a week expenses) by flogging royal yarns to the gullible foreign press. To prevent him taking his non-existent talents elsewhere, the *Mirror* recently awarded him a £10,000 pay rise and a special "Royal Confidential" 0898- phone line, heavily plugged in the *Mirror*, from which he keeps most of the proceeds.

His results hardly justify such lavish rewards. He was scooped by Andrew Morton a year ago, and has never lived down the fact that he exclusively got Lady Di pregnant three months before she actually conceived. Princess Anne and her spouse also decided to divorce without telling him. Perhaps his finest hour was his "exclusive" revelation last September that Charles and Diana were to stay together — only weeks before the official separation was announced.

IF GCHQ *did* bug the royal family, then one thing is certain: the bugger wasn't a trade unionist.

Margaret Thatcher's government sacked members of the GCHQ staff who belonged to a trade union. Why? Because such people couldn't be trusted with confidential matters like the nation's security.

CEMENT giant Blue Circle is considering suing the ministry of defence over radioactive contamination at its site next to the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) at Aldermaston.

Blue Circle announced last month that it was leaving the Berkshire site after it learnt — only in January this year — that a flood at AWE back in 1989 had contaminated part of the site with uranium and plutonium. Radioactive contamination was so serious that 1,500 cubic metres of soil have had to be removed.

Solicitors Denton Hall Burgin and Warren have now been instructed by Blue Circle; and any claim for compensation against the MoD could be as embarrassing as it is substantial.

"Oh no! It's a Pantomime Dane!"

STREET of SHAME

WHAT happens to tabloid royal "experts" when they become terminally fat and self-important? They become James Whitaker of the *Daily Mirror*.

"Fat Tomato", as he is respectfully called by his many admirers (*Name one. Ed.*) has not only survived the purge of good hacks at the *Mirror* who have been sacked or had their pay cut, but he has seen both his wallet and his waist grow in tandem.

As Whitaker grows richer and fatter, his prosperity has earned him the resentment of some colleagues, of course — not least the *Mirror*'s deputy editor, Phil Swift.

In the midst of the rumpus over the *Sun* theft of the bugging "story", Swift, not unreasonably, asked Whitaker, his royal correspondent, to write an article for his own newspaper. "Good God," the Pompous Tomato replied, "I'm far too busy. This means I may have to come in at the weekend."

NOTHING is going right at the moment for the ex-saintly Andreas Whittam Strobes, editor and chief executive of the *Indescribablyboring*.

Sales of both his Sunday and daily newspapers are plummeting; his attempt to buy the *Observer* was foiled; his former colleague Stephen Glover has published a highly damaging portrait of him in the book *Paper Dreams*; and he has been forced to allow his two largest shareholders, *El Pais* and *La Repubblica* (the "southern Europeans", as he calls them), to raise their investment in the paper to the point where they will soon, in effect, have a controlling stake. To cap it all, the company's chairman, Ralf Dahrendorf, has resigned in protest at Whittam Strobes's megalomaniac methods.

The parting of the ways with Dahrendorf was provoked by a meeting he and Strobes attended with two representatives from *El Pais* and *La Repubblica* on Wednesday 28 April. Having just heard that the *Guardian* was bidding about £26 million for the *Observer*, Strobes wanted to increase his own offer. But the "southern Europeans" seemed unenthusiastic, saying that he ought to put his own house in order before going on a spending spree. Strobes turned for support to Dahrendorf — only to learn, to his fury and amazement, that Dahrendorf agreed with them. The *Grauniad*'s bid therefore went through unopposed.

With the Italians and Spaniards now firmly in the driving seat, bets are being taken on how soon Strobes will be asked to step down as editor or chief executive (or even both). In a desperate attempt to ingratiate himself with the men from *La Repubblica*, Strobes has been teaching himself Italian — with limited success. It might be a wise precaution for him at least to learn the Italian for "you're fired".

The position of Matthew Symonds, the *Indie*'s bouffant-haired deputy editor, is even more precarious. Earlier this year Strobes and Symonds commissioned managing editor Charlie Burgess to ask heads of department what they thought was wrong with the paper; the almost unanimous reply was that they could not bear working with Symonds.

Although Burgess loyally tried to play this down in his report, news of it has now reached other members of the board, who may well feel that Symonds's unusual talents could be better employed elsewhere.

SCOOP!

WHEN the Queen's nephew Viscount Linley marries heiress Serena Stanhope in October, he will, in a roundabout way, be unwittingly bringing his cousin Prince Charles's close friend Camilla Parker Bowles into the Royal Family.

Serena's father Viscount Petersham is the son of the Earl of Harrington, whose third wife Priscilla is the daughter of the late Archibald Cubitt, brother of the third Baron Ashcombe.

In 1946 Ashcombe's sister Rosalind married Major Bruce Shand and the couple had a daughter the following year, who in 1973 wed Andrew Parker Bowles. The rest, as they say, is history.

Nigel Dempster, Daily Mail

DAVID MONTGOMERY, chief executive of Mirror Group Newspapers, told an angry shareholders' meeting last week that the people he had sacked in recent months had "chosen to go".

As he was speaking, henchpersons in his "human resources department" were posting a letter to Margaret Renn, mother of the *Daily Mirror*'s National Union of Journalists' chapel, sacking her retrospectively from 30 April. The sacking followed that of the NUJ's branch chairman, Tim Minogue, a few days earlier.

Montgomery explained to the meeting that he could not meet or recognise the NUJ because it had held "disruptive meetings". He was interrupted by Lesley Miller, mother of the GPMU chapel (print and media workers' union) at the *Mirror*, who said that the GPMU had held no disruptive meetings, but Montgomery refused to recognise or talk to it, either.

While smashing trade unions and driving down pay rates throughout the group, Montgomery and Co have made sure they themselves are secure in their old age — at the expense of the company they have hijacked. In sharp contrast to other pensioners of former Maxwell companies, Montgomery has arranged for £56,000 of *Mirror* money to be paid into a private pension scheme for him and four of his henchmen, including finance director John Allwood and company secretary Paul Vickers.

PENNY-PINCHING *Mirror* supremo Amanda Platell is so keen to work miracles on the balance sheet she wants reporters to walk on water.

A veteran freelance recently dispatched from Manchester to report a football match at Birkenhead had the Mersey tunnel toll fee — all £2 of it — lopped from his expenses.

When the puzzled hack asked why, he was told that he should have found another way of getting to the ground — even though the only alternative road route would have added 60 miles to his journey.

LAST Wednesday most media correspondents were busy writing about the tabloid war between the *Sun* and the *Mirror* over the Prince and Princess of Wales. But not at the *Times*.

There, media correspondent Alexandra Frean was ordered to ignore the story. Instead, her bosses wanted her to concentrate on far more important news: the "success" of BSkyB, which had announced that it was now making an operating profit of £1.7 million a week.

Frean's piece, which duly appeared in Thursday's paper, neglected to mention that BSkyB is owned by her newspaper's proprietor, Rupert Murdoch. It also omitted one rather important fact which might help explain BSkyB's sudden profitability: that all its debts have been paid off by its parent company, the Dirty Digger's News Corporation.

THE LONDON *Evening Standard*'s opera critic, a young man named Alexander Waugh (yes, he is the son of Auberon Waugh) has come a spectacular cropper following his review of the first night of English National Opera's *Barber of Seville* at the London Coliseum last week.

Waugh went into raptures over the performance of distinguished Welsh singer Della Jones in the leading role of Rosina. Alas! La Jones had in fact been indisposed that evening, and her place was taken by the Australian singer Fiona Janes.

An announcement to this effect was made from the stage; a press release carrying the news was inserted into reviewers' programmes; the ENO press officer Jane Livingstone even had a long chat with Waugh about Della Jones's absence during the interval, and handed him a photograph of the replacement singer.

In spite of this, the wretched boy still somehow failed to notice that Della Jones was not singing. To cap it all, he couldn't even remember what day it was: he claimed in his review to have attended the opera on Friday, a night when *The Barber of Seville* was not performed.

Waugh's newspaper has now been obliged to print an apology to all concerned.

"Oh look! Her father's giving her away"

DONALD "Pixie" Trelford is evidently making the most of his last days as editor of the *Observer*.

Already smarting from critical remarks about his tenure from ex-colleague Magnus Linklater and former *Times* editor Lord Rees-Mogg, he will not be pleased with Tom Bower's forthcoming BBC documentary about his proprietor, Tiny Rowland.

Bower has unearthed footage from a 1983 *Newsnight* report in which Trelford was filmed during the election campaign saying that he would brook no proprietorial interference with his paper's political line. He also said the paper would recommend its readers to vote Labour.

The Bower documentary juxtaposes this footage with a segment of Tony Howard, formerly Trelford's deputy editor, explaining how he came across the pre-election editorial just before it went to press and noticed that Pixie had instead urged readers to give the Tories a second term (on Tiny's instruction, as it later transpired). Howard pointed out that the BBC and others would not hesitate to embarrass Trelford if this went ahead, since he had committed the paper to Labour in the earlier interview.

No doubt this incident will sit uneasily alongside Trelford's pompous declaration, in the course of his review of Stephen Glover's *Paper Dreams*, that editors "should not resign for reasons of pride; only principle". Tiny's poodle, who will forever be remembered for producing the only mid-week edition in the *Observer*'s history in order to publish, in breach of copyright, the DTI inspector's report on the Fayeds, never had it in him to resign either for reasons of pride or principle.

MICHAEL WALTERS, deputy City editor of the *Daily Mail* and close confidant of Asil Nadir, is going to great lengths to promote his book *How to Profit from the Coming Share Boom*.

A gushing, four-page promo leaflet raves that Walters "is one of Britain's most respected Financial Journalists... he enjoys a legendary reputation as one of the City's most authoritative financial writers.

"As deputy editor of the DAILY MAIL'S financial pages," it continues, "he is ideally placed to write and comment upon every aspect of investment markets..."

A pity, then, that the no doubt proud "deputy editor of the *Daily Mail's* financial pages" should be photographed peering from behind a whacking great copy of the *Financial Times*, and not his own organ.

● *A friend in need, In the City, page 28*

AN APPALLING xenophopic lapse has occurred at the *Guardian*, the bastion of liberal taste, decency and very dull stories about teaching.

Earlier this month it carried a report about a man who, passed over for promotion, took it out on his neighbour's six-year-old son by beating him to death, dismembering him and leaving his severed head on a bus.

The attack happened in China; and with a disregard for the lives of foreigners that would make the *Sun* blush, a waggish Guardian sub headlined the story *HACKED OFF*. Would the heading have been so flip if the six-year-old lived in London NW3? Probably not.

Grovel

I UNDERSTAND that Tiny Rowland's paranoia over what might be contained in Tom Bower's unauthorised biography of him has taken some amusing turns in recent months.

It would appear that the Rowland lawyer who has been bombarding Bower with letters, Andrew Nitch-Smith, of Denton Hall Burgin & Warren, has been relying rather too much on the testimony of Mrs Francesca Pollard.

She was the woman, readers may recall, who for years led a campaign of vilification against Rowland because she thought he had defrauded her father. Befriended at first by Rowland's enemies, the Fayed brothers, Pollard was later "turned" by Tiny and has since become one of his stooges.

Last month Nitch-Smith wrote to Bower saying that Pollard claimed to have read the manuscript of Bower's book (at a time before Bower had actually started writing his manuscript) and that she recalled some of its contents. "For example, Mr Rowland was said to maintain control over fellow directors of Lonrho by engaging in homosexual practices with them, whilst Sir Edward du Cann was accused of bestiality. Needless to say, such allegations were a vicious fabrication, the only object of which was to be sensational and damaging."

Needless to say, Bower was much amused by this letter and responded to it by inquiring whether Nitch-Smith regarded everything Pollard said as accurate and reliable. In this connection, he enclosed a photograph of Pollard bearing a placard which read: "Rowland Rat: Tiny is a Big Thief — The City's Al Capone".

Nitch-Smith has since written to inquire how Bower intends to treat the matter of Rowland's arrest by the Gestapo and imprisonment for eight weeks in a Berlin jail. Nitch-Smith describes this as "a major event in Mr Rowland's life". The clear implication is that Rowland was regarded as a dissident by the Nazi regime, whereas in fact he was imprisoned for black marketeering.

No doubt he is anxious that Bower will make much of his membership of the Hitler Youth and his detention under rule 18B on the Isle of Man during the second world war as a suspected Nazi sympathiser. Publicity about such matters might prove embarrassing to a man who has been doing good deeds for Israel in recent years, such as obtaining the release of three Israeli citizens in the Sudan.

TO CAMBRIDGE with the spotless "Lord" Jeffrey Archer for a charity auction where the lots include a signed copy of Edwina Currie's book, ***What Women Want*****.**

As Jeffrey calls the lot, my tactless chum cannot resist a quip: "Too bloody much if you ask me!" he says.

Unkind souls are heard to murmur that the great author and statesman must be referring to the high cost of living encountered on the streets of Shepherds Market, Mayfair.

No flicker of a smile passes the lips of the faithful and fragrant Mary, who, standing to one side of her brash and insensitive husband, is as supportive as ever.

● *AT LAST gainful employment for Lady Thatcher, who has been invited by Boutros Boutros-Ghali, secretary-general of the United Nations, to sit on a very important advisory body which will, among other things, advise the third world on how to climb the ladder and achieve economic parity with the rest of us. She is an inspired choice, one feels, for she has already done sterling work in this direction by taking Britain several rungs down the ladder, thus narrowing the gap markedly and making it much easier for the third world to catch up.*

● *WHY IS IT so often the liberal-minded who turn out to have been the keenest sadists at school?*

Among MPs there are Labour's Michael Meacher, who will always be remembered by novelist Paul Binding for the caning he gave him, and Douglas Hurd, that impeccable liberal Tory, the very sight of whom pontificating on the telly is still guaranteed to strike fear into Indescribablyboring on Sunday hack Neal Ascherson. Hurd, as the Eye revealed years ago, was known as "Hitler" Hurd during his days at Eton where he was a compulsive flogger.

Now I can reveal that the new Liberal Democrat member for Newbury, David Rendel, is also a former disciplinarian. My informant recalls that during his days at Eton, Rendel was "captain of chamber", the junior 20 or so places in College. In this capacity the po-faced Rendel was an especially vicious wielder of the syphon — an improvised weapon made from a length of rubber tubing used to connect a Bunsen burner to a gas tap.

SAD TIDINGS from UMIST, Manchester university's science and technology faculty, where an important academic appointment — the Polly Peck chair in international business — is now unlikely to go ahead.

While Asil Nadir was still legit, chucking money at the Tory party and living within these shores, he offered UMIST £300,000 to be spent over five years on the much-needed seat of learning. Sadly, only £40,000 of the money emerged before Nadir's empire reached its own nadir.

UMIST, it seems, will take money from almost any source. The last time funds were provided by a famous financier they was used to set up the Gerald Ronson Hall of Residence. No doubt it has a bar that serves draught Guinness...

"No, no – I'm not living with the dish anymore"

REREADING *I Claud*, the memoirs of my late and much-missed colleague Claud Cockburn, I am greatly taken with his account of the 1929 Wall Street crash and the part in it played by a man named Lamont:

"Silver-haired Mr Lamont received us with a manner so reassuring that, upon me and others, it had the same effect as Hinrich's warning against the use of the word 'panic'. It was like the manner of the man who comes on the stage of a burning theatre and urges everyone to keep perfectly cool, stating there is no cause for alarm...

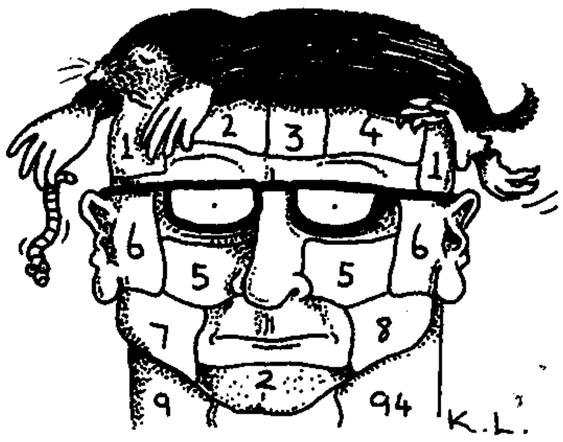
" 'There has been a little distress selling on the Stock Exchange,' he said, 'and we have held a meeting of the heads of several financial institutions to discuss the situation. We have found that there are no Houses in difficulty and the reports from brokers indicate that margins are being maintained satisfactorily.'

"...Nothing fundamental, he said, had changed. There was nothing basically wrong with the country's economy. What had occurred was simply due to 'a technical condition of the market'."

Quite unlike our own dear Mr Lamont, of course.

Pip Pip!

Pseuds Corner



Duncton Found, **the last** *Chronicle*, **was published in 1989. Horwood's fans concluded the journey was finished, even if the 'last Book of Moledom', the fabled Book of Silence, was yet undiscovered. But three days after his mother's death in 1989, a solitary mole trekked across the landscape of his mind. Her name was Privet, she was a scribemole from the North of Moledom, and she was searching for The Book of Silence...**

Horwood journeyed to the deepest glades and darkest tunnels of Duncton Wood, to find The Book of Silence and the power of redemptive love. Rarely can so troubled a beginning have found so creative and stunning a resolution.

...We find courage, and love; we face darkness and war; we find the inspiration, as Horwood himself did, to turn tragedy to triumph.

Advertisement for *Duncton Stone*
by William Horwood

I don't wear gold now. Today my favourite piece of jewellery is a silver ring with love, peace and nooky inscribed on it in Latin.

LUKE GOSS
Daily Telegraph

"How do you feel when you go down on a woman," asks Terence Trent D'Arby and, without allowing you a second to unbutton your lip and air your views, he's off. "I see it as a form of worship. It's a sacrament, a prayer, communion. I always say thank you afterwards. Someone gives you a beautiful meal, you say thank you. A woman allows you to share her body, to enter her shrine, you should thank them."

Q Magazine

Something terrible can happen and I will be completely unmoved by it. But then I may see someone on television and there is something not quite right — maybe someone with a toupée that is slightly askew — and that will move me incredibly.

I think my stories work in the same way. For example, I was in the canteen the other day and a woman I work with said, "look, over there" and she pointed. At one of the tables was a very old man; he must have been at least 75, and he was eating a yoghurt. She was just fascinated by this, and it occurred to me it was a great way of looking at things. The thing is, you seldom see very old men eating yoghurts. Immediately, that sparked something. I came home and wrote *Old man Yoghurt* in my ideas book.

NICOLA BARKER
Writers News

His [Lord Gowrie's] qualifications for the job [chairman of the Arts Council] are impeccable. Aged 53, Gowrie is a poet, an academic, and was this year's chairman of the Booker Prize judges. An intellectual, his best friends include Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber, Baroness Thatcher, Mick Jagger and Melvyn Bragg. He was also chairman of the Really Useful Theatre Company.

Sunday Times

CONTRIBUTORS: C. Hicks, Caroline Hanson, Harry J. Fox, Mike Scott, R. & V. Hinman.

£10 paid for entries

THOSE pondering the future of privatised rail in Britain need look no further than pilot private sector ventures like Charterail, Tiger Rail and Stagecoach. All ran into the buffers.

They are being joined by another private sector cock-up — the grandiose-sounding Great Scottish and Western Railway Company — which transport secretary John "Brunel" MacGregor is keen to keep secret.

The company operates the lavish Royal Scotsman tourist train (£2,000-a-head for weekend trips) but sadly has been unable to pay British Rail for last year's use of track or for hire of the locomotive. The outstanding debt — not unadjacent to £200,000 — is easily enough to cripple this year's programme if GS&WRC and its equally grandiose entrepreneurial owner, Brian Fergus Hobbs, are compelled to stump up.

Luckily for both, "Brunel" has made it clear to BR that action to recover the debt would be "highly embarrassing" at a time when the government is spending £24 million on a PR campaign to drum up interest in new rail franchises.

If potential franchisees seem distinctly underwhelmed by the prospect of enriching themselves in the government's crazy scheme, at least one section of the community seems set to benefit. The transport department confidentially estimates that *14,000 separate contracts* will be needed before its mad plan is "up and running" — which will create lots and lots of lucrative work for m'learned friends and their solicitor chums.

ONCE AGAIN courageous members of parliament have shown how they will fight against reforming legislation if there is any danger of it threatening commercial interests.

The osteopaths' bill, for example, was an entirely uncontroversial measure introduced by Malcolm Moss, the mild-mannered Tory MP for Cambridgeshire North-East. It came up for rubber-stamping in the House of Commons on 8 May, and debate started at 9.34am. It was expected to last a few minutes. Astonishingly, it went on for three and a half hours ending at 1.15pm, only an hour and a quarter before the end of the day's session.

So who were the MPs who showed an uncanny interest in osteopathy?

There was Sir Nicholas Bonsor, Tory MP for Upminster. He reveals himself in the register of MPs' interests as chairman (unpaid) of the British Field Sports Society, and as a farmer who owns farmland. He was backed to the hilt by Quentin Davies (Tory, Stamford and Spalding), who said he had taken advice from "a member of the medical profession — my father". Mr Davies supplements his earnings as an advertising and PR executive with income from a farm — he modestly declares a "small flock of ewes"; a flock that grew even smaller some years ago when the ewes were so poorly fed a few of them died.

On and on went the two farmers, banging away about the minutiae of the proposed osteopaths' register. At long last, the bill got its third reading without a vote against and was passed.

Next up was the hedgerows bill, a weak effort put forward by another Tory backbencher — Peter Ainsworth from Surrey East — and which was not so lucky. That bill, too, was supported by the government and all opposition parties. It proposed some very mild restrictions on farmers who tear down hedgerows and was bitterly opposed by farmers and the Country Landowners' Association, not to mention the British Field Sports Society.

After the verbal pummelling of the osteopaths' bill, only an hour and a quarter was left for debate on hedgerows. This was filled in the main by complaints from Tory MPs. Geoffrey Clifton-Brown (Cirencester and Tewksbury) was first in the field. He made several contributions before remembering to declare his interest as a farmer and a member of the Country Landowners Association. He was joined by former Tory agriculture minister Michael Jopling (Westmoreland), who is a rich farmer, and Peter Atkinson (Tory, Hexham), who is parliamentary consultant to the British Field Sports Society.

Poor Mr Ainsworth sat mildly by as his bill was relentlessly talked out of existence. It finally fell forever at 2.30pm. The opposition complained, but the government didn't. Junior agriculture minister David Maclean, whose Penrith and Border constituency is full of farmers, praised his filibustering colleagues on the remarkable grounds that the bill "is now a far better bill than it was initially". True, no doubt, but then the bill no longer exists.

THE CLEAN-OUT of departmental heads at Labour's Walworth Road HQ, which is losing both director of organisation Joyce Gould and research director Geoff Bish, may yet include party general-secretary Larry Whitty.

Whitty isn't yet 50, but he has become an unperson with John Smith, the party leader. If PR director David Hill, who spends most of his time in Smith's Westminster office, also leaves Walworth Road, a lot of new talent will be needed to keep Bish's recent replacement company in SE1.

THE FACE of Neville Trotter, Tory MP for Tynemouth, is festooned with egg following a premature "exclusive" in one of his local papers, the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*.

On 11 May the *Chronicle* announced that the Swan Hunter shipyard had "won the dramatic battle to secure the biggest order for years for the royal navy". The report promised that "victory in the struggle to secure the order for a £170m helicopter landing vessel is set to be confirmed within the next 24 hours."

According to the *Chronicle*, Trotter gave "much of the credit for the 20,000-tonne vessel order to Mr Major himself, saying that without him the order would have been vetoed by the Whitehall money men. He said the sheer speed of the operation — lorry loads of designs and costs had been evaluated in the exercise — was a clear signal that Swan Hunter had won the tough battle... Even this afternoon the hustle to confirm the good news was speeding up even more."

The next day, however, reality dawned: a report in the *Guardian* revealed that the contract had gone to Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering at Barrow-in-Furness and Kvaerner Govan on the Clyde. No doubt Trotter will be give the credit for this decision to his hero John Major, too.

JACK STRAW, Labour's shadow environment secretary, is in big trouble with m'learned friends over Lambeth council's corruption saga.

When news broke in January of Lambeth's missing £10 million, Straw whipped off a press release saying that as far as Labour was concerned, "fraud, corruption and mismanagement" would be "rooted out and those responsible brought to book... This we did in Liverpool and Lambeth in 1991 when 13 members of the council were expelled from the Labour group."

Not even the Tory press fingered individual councillors for blame; but just to rub it in, Straw, soon after, told the Labour paper *Tribune*: "I'm damned if we're going to be tarred with the brush as Lambeth, especially as we cleared out 13 semi-Trotskyite councillors... It is no surprise that in both Liverpool and Lambeth corruption and Trotskyism went hand in hand."

The quote appeared twice: first in a news story about the corruption scandal; then in an interview with the Blackburn MP. The Lambeth 13 are somewhat miffed at being associated with council corruption, especially when all the reports had pointed towards town hall officers or dodgy commercial practices being to blame. The 13 have engaged comrades Sue, Grabbit and Runne to defend their honour.

PART FIVE of our series on Britain's busy members of parliament who are not too busy to use their positions at Westminster to grab lucrative jobs on the side.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Sir Thomas Arnold *Hazel Grove*: Consultant to International Advisory Services Ltd, Gibraltar.

Kenneth Baker *Mole Valley*: Director of Torrey Investments Inc.

Ian Bruce *South Dorset*: Consultant to the Saudi-American Bank.

Matthew Carrington *Fulham*: Adviser to the Saudi International Bank.

Nirj Deva *Brentford and Isleworth*: Director of Ceylon and Foreign Trades Ltd.

Sir Edward Heath *Old Bexley and Sidcup*: Adviser to the China Investment and Development Fund Ltd and to Kleinwort Benson China Management Ltd.

Robert Maclennan *Caithness and Sutherland*: Director of Atlantic Tele-Network Inc.

THE AVIATION LOBBY

Nirj Deva *Brentford and Isleworth*: Director-designate of Fitzroy Aviation Ltd.

John Gilbert *Dudley East*: International adviser to Royal Jordanian Airlines.

Iain Sproat *Harwich*: Consultant to American Airlines.

Anthony Steen *South Hams*: Adviser to Airlines of Great Britain (plus regular travel on a number of airlines in connection with airline work in the UK and Europe. Also receives occasional free air travel for immediate family in UK and Europe).

Nicholas Winterton *Macclesfield*: Adviser to Scorpio Aviation and Marine Ltd.

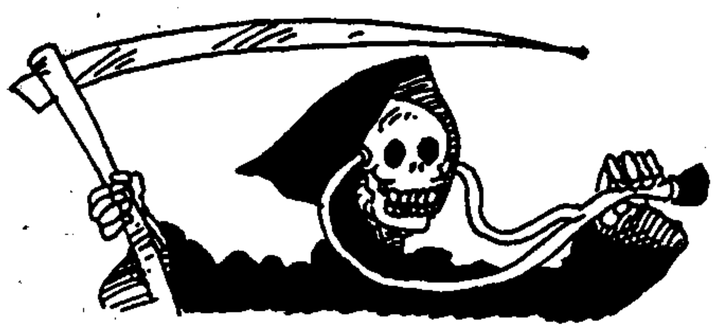
PS: We regret that **John Sykes**, MP for Scarborough, was not included in the oil lobby section of MPs For Hire in the last *Eye*. He is a director and shareholder of Shaws Petroleum Ltd.

DISGUSTED by Kenneth Clarke's refusal to refer the Bridgewater Four case back to the appeal court, Nottinghamshire campaigners recently organised a picket of his constituency surgery.

Two of them obtained an audience with the great man. But when they asked about the case he exploded: "It's none of your business."

Worse was to come. Panicking at the sight of the local media filming and photographing the protestors, Clarke's staff hastily rounded up the hacks for a quick interview. However, media-wise campaigners rebutted his claims point by point in a subsequent interview, and Clarke was said to be incandescent with irritation about the resulting coverage on local TV.

He has every reason to be angry. In response to his taunt that "these people can wave placards as much as they like", supporters of the four who were wrongfully convicted of the murder of newspaper boy Carl Bridgewater (see *Eyes passim*) have applied for a judicial review of the home secretary's decision. They have been granted legal aid.



DOING THE ROUNDS

AMNIOCENTESIS is designed to detect fetal abnormalities in time for a mother-to-be to opt for a termination of her pregnancy.

Some overseas patients are using London's private amniocentesis clinics merely to discover the sex of their fetus — and if the fetus is female, they go to another private hospital for a *termination*.

● CASH shortages at **Yeovil district hospital** have forced nurses in casualty to wash bedpans by hand. The hospital, part of **East Somerset NHS trust**, is the only DGH in the south-west without an automatic washer. Staff have also been forced to put up their own shelves and use cardboard boxes to keep records in. There is no drinking tap water in the casualty department, no secretary for the consultant and no partitions between the cubicles. Trust spokesman Kate Nichols said chief executive Gordon Mitchell "did not want to be questioned on petty issues like this".

● THE **Royal National Orthopaedic Trust** in **Middlesex** is too broke to pay even the 1.5 percent pay increase awarded to its employees. Pay increments have also been stopped, 12 senior nurses face redundancy and no new staff will be employed. Meanwhile, the **North Hertfordshire NHS Trust** is axing 44 staff, 36 of whom are trained nurses.

● MANAGERS at **St Bartholomew's hospital** spent a lot of money designing and printing trust logos and letterheads in preparation for their financial independence. Now that trust status has been rescinded, the stationery has been recalled and new letterheads are being produced with the word "trust" replaced by "group". How long the group will last is a matter of debate: junior health minister Brian Mahwinney has already launched a clearing house in Norfolk Square Mews for NHS staff in London made surplus to requirements by the Tomlinson report. Those living outside London will be pleased to hear that the £170 million earmarked to improve GP services in the capital, as outlined by Tomlinson, will not come from the treasury but from reducing the budgets of other health authorities.

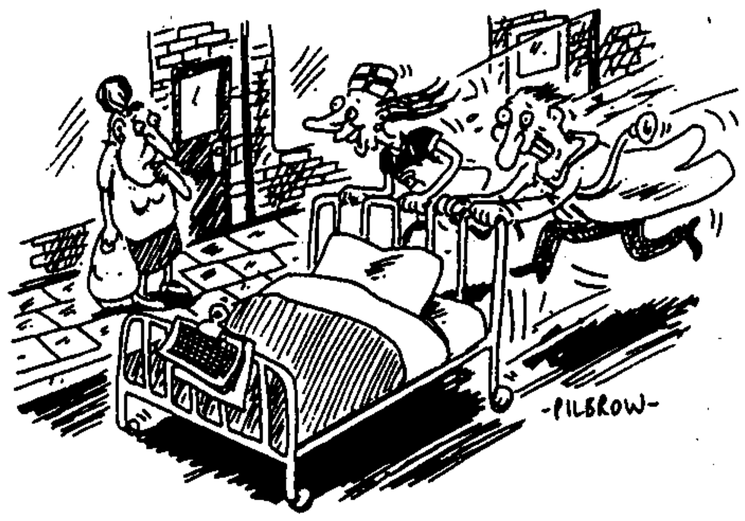
● **QUEEN Elizabeth II hospital** in **Welwyn Garden City, Lister hospital** in **Stevenage**, the **Wellhouse trust** in **Edgware** and **Watford general hospital** have all failed to agree contracts with their health authorities for the current financial year and are now providing elective surgery for patients of fundholding GPs only.

Buckinghamshire DHA has been forced to cut its budget by £150,000, and **Aylesbury DHA** is still broke despite receiving a £1 million bail-out from **Oxfordshire RHA. Mid Downs DHA** has had to cut its contract with **Horsham** and **Crawley hospitals**, as has **East and North Herts DHA** with **Chase Farm hospital**, and **South Birmingham DHA** faces an overspend of almost £20 million. The **Royal Surrey County hospital** in **Lister** has been forced to make cutbacks after treating 2,500 more patients than it was paid for last year. Agency nurses and midwives have been banned and overtime has been reduced. And there are still 46 weeks of the financial year to go...

● NON-EXECUTIVE directors of the new **Bromley Hospitals NHS Trust** include three property developers, a solicitor and an accountant. This may help expedite controversial plans to build a new hospital on a green-belt site and flog off **Orpington hospital** to a supermarket chain (*Eye* 801).

● STAFF at the **Dundee teaching hospitals NHS trust** were invited to celebrate their new-found financial independence by attending a launch day on 1 April. "The trust board look forward to working with you in developing and enhancing the quality of services we provide," gushed chairman J. Stuart Fair. He neglected to add that the celebrations, which included a costly luncheon of prime roast Angus beef bordelaise, were paid for by plundering the staff endowment fund.

● **NORTH West regional health authority** has launched a patients' advice bureau phone service "to provide comprehensive, accurate and reliable information about local health services". Those who dial the helpline (0800 678888) get straight through to Acorn Computers, who are more than happy to provide you with an information *pack for* a new computer.



"No, it's not Rag Week — we're just nicking this bed from another hospital"

● MORE THAN 80 jobs are set to go after **Wirral Health Authority's** decision to award the cleaning contract for **Wallasey's Victoria Central Hospital** and **Birkenhead's St Catherine's hospital** to RCO Support Services. Meanwhile, the 300 auxiliary nurses at **Wirral Hospital** will be docked 6 percent of their wages if they take more than three days off sick a year. Trust director Paul Holt is hoping this will "make the workforce more flexible".

● **HEREFORD and Worcester FHSA** general manager Clive Parr has been paid £100,000 from NHS funds to compensate for his inability to sell his Cheshire house. As he put it: "No one is gaining from this." Meanwhile, West Sussex FHSA manager Colonel Terry Knott, famous for employing his wife and a personal chauffeur (*Eye* 817), has been suspended on full pay (£56,000 a year).

● IN MARCH the department of health sent out 72 press releases; 22 starting modestly "Virginia Bottomley" and three more mentioning her in the first sentence. Attention is drawn to H93/504 "Virginia Bottomley launches bursary scheme for NHS staff"; H93/508 "Virginia Bottomley launches bursary scheme for NHS staff"; and H93/530 "Virginia Bottomley pledges to weed out red tape".

M.D.

WITHOUT so much as a blush, Sir Marcus Fox, chairman of the 1922 committee of Tory backbenchers, voted in the coal debate in favour of Michael Heseltine's pits closure policy.

As readers will know (see *Eye* 816), the MP for Shipley is also a director of the Bristol Port Company which, along with National Power, has spent £80 million on a new import terminal to bring in cheap subsidised coal from countries like Colombia, where they send child-slaves down the mines.

The terminal will be much more in demand if Britain's own coal supply is reduced. And though Sir Marcus only voted in what he believed to be the national good, happily his vote also turned out to benefit the company that pays him a director's fee.

LORD Meghnad Desai, Labour spokesman in the Lords, was sacked from his front bench role allegedly because of an article he wrote in *Tribune*.

What really upset John Smith was not so much the content — it said that if a Labour government could not increase income tax and national insurance on the higher paid, it should contemplate putting VAT on everything — but that he had not seen the article and was made to look foolish by John Major.

Two of his colleagues on the front bench — fatties Gordon Brown and Harriet Harman, both treasury shadows — *did* know about it but were too thick to warn him it might be used by the prime minister at question time. So Smith walked straight into it.

Brown was so angry that one of his staff phoned *Tribune* to accuse the editor, Paul Anderson, of leaking the story to Tory central office. But the truth is simpler than that. *Tribune* appears a day early in the Westminster area and Tory central office is among the first customers at the newspaper stand in Westminster tube station.

Desai, a professor at the London School of Economics, was made a peer two years ago by Neil Kinnock. If Labour had won the election he was destined (with John Eatwell) to be one of the two boffins advising on economic policy. Last year, these two putative advisers engaged in high-minded policy discussions about whether Labour should devalue immediately after victory or not. But that was in private. What Desai failed to appreciate was that it is an offence in the current leadership's eyes to let the hoi polloi share in his thinking. If Labour had been prepared to discuss such heretical thoughts openly before the last election its economic policy might have been more credible. But even now, after the election is lost, no one is allowed to utter nonconformist truths.

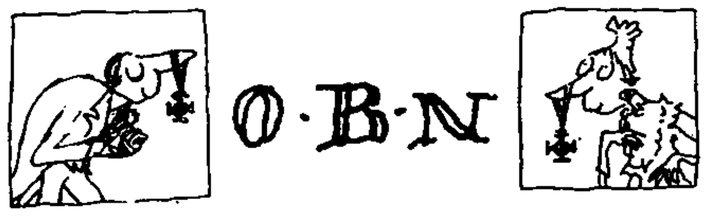
WHILE monitoring air pollution in our big cities, environment secretary Michael Howard will — by a delightful twist — be contributing to the finances of a company that is inextricably linked with, er, causing pollution.

Howard has asked Rendel Science and Environment to do the monitoring; and while their name may mean little to most wheezing members of the public, the company is actually part of... Tarmac.

Tarmac, to whom we are indebted for thousands of miles of macadam on which polluting vehicles thrive, is a member of the British Road Federation, which itself is wedded to road transport. Road transport is responsible for most of the carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxide in the atmosphere, as well as nearly half of what Tarmac calls "airborne fine particles" and which Friends of the Earth calls black smoke.

As FoE's transport campaigner Roger Higman comments: "It must be nice to make money by building roads, destroying the countryside, causing more pollution *and* then make more money by monitoring it. Perhaps the government will shortly appoint Tarmac as its wildlife adviser."

'Backbiter'



I never knew what the phrase "she can write like an angel" meant until I read this babe's book *Four Bare Legs in a Bed*... But there *is* something other-worldly, something seraphically savage about Helen Simpson's work. But she's not. The bitch is cute as hell — and she's a year younger than me! If I was looking to be annoyed about being left off this poxy list, this is the one I'd really sharpen my claws on. But faced with such talent, awe is the only correct response.

JULIE BURCHILL
The Times

We expressed our strong belief last week that Lonrho would not dispose of the newspaper without safeguarding its future and ensuring that its distinctive voice and values, forged over two centuries, would be maintained. The staff of *The Observer* are relieved and delighted that this confidence has been rewarded. The readers share this debt of gratitude to Mr 'Tiny' Rowland and his fellow directors, both for their support over the past decade and for the honourable manner in which they have handed on the torch.

EDITORIAL
The Observer

Submitted by Emily Morris, K. Wallace.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

EYE TV

Peak Practice

(ITV)

THE INVENTION of television raised an unexpected problem for the acting profession. The medium might pay much better than theatre, but the handsome salary came at a price.

In theatre, it was tacitly accepted by the audience that each role was a step on a career ladder: spectators, having seen a player in one part, would explicitly express a desire to see one day "his Hamlet" or "her Hedda".

But, for the mass television audience, every job was a full-stop. Shown hours and hours of an actor in a certain role, they wanted only to see more of the same. The next step on the career ladder was made painfully in diving boots to a chorus of resentment. A whole new acting skill was born: the throwing-off of a famous role.

With *Peak Practice* — a glossy new ITV drama serial about a maverick young doctor transplanted to a sleepy Peak District village — Kevin Whately follows his *Inspector Morse* co-star, John Thaw, in failing horribly and noisily at this task.

As Dr Jack Kerruish, Whately took all the routine precautions. He grew his hair out and had deliberately chosen the role of a short-tempered, big-mouthed, intellectually razor-sharp sexual roisterer, in loud counterpoint to the gentle, dumb, maritally solid Sergeant Lewis from *Inspector Morse*. And he might as well not have bothered. Viewers — who were, anyway, drawn to an unoriginal series conceit only by its inclusion of a *Morse* star — spend the whole time wondering what old Lewis is doing in a country surgery.

Square Eyes has a modest proposal for dealing with acting transitions of this sort. Why could the baggage carried by the particular face not be openly stashed at the new address?

Hence, *Peak Practice* would become a series about a Thames Valley sergeant who throws up his job, goes to medical school and, seven years later, his hair perhaps shorter rather than longer, takes up a first posting in a village practice. In the opening episode, Dr Lewis (for it would be he) would need only a wry expositional speech like: "I reckon old Morse thought I were a bit slow, like. He should have seen us in Anatomy, tho but. Top of the class." In the first couple of episodes, Dr Lewis would occasionally contrast the rural goings-on with famous police cases in which he had been involved, then the past would gradually be dropped.

Similarly, *A Year in Provence* — John Thaw's ruinous post-*Morse* role — would have become the story of a top Thames Valley detective who — sickened by the increasing violence of Britain — takes early retirement, marries an old flame on a whim and decamps to the Luberon. At a stroke, this would have given the complete lack of incident in the series a relevance and poignancy (Morse is slowly recovering and forgetting), underpinned the underwritten main relationship and eased the recognition problem for the central actor.

In fact, it can rapidly be seen that this way of dealing with the ghost of an old role would give a welcome new point and edge to a vast number of creaky serials. In *Medics*, for example, a colleague might comment to Tom Baker's chief surgeon: "Bit different from when you were a universal time lord, eh, old man?", to which Mr Who (as the surgeon would be known) would reply with a speech about a fault in the Tardis trapping him for eternity in a general hospital in Manchester.

Puritanical social realists — and luvvies — will doubtless object that these proposals trivialise drama and miss the point of acting. But the audience clearly brings such character flashbacks to a new series and publicity plays on the connections — "Dr Who?" asks a Granada poster above a picture of Tom Baker masked up in *Medics* — so why should the problems not be incorporated in the programme?

Mention of *Medics* touches on the other drawback of *Peak Practice*. Some critics have described it as *All Creatures Great And Small* with people instead of beasts, but this ignores the new show's more striking genetic connection. Replacing *Medics* on a Monday night, *Peak Practice* is joined there by *Surgical Spirit*, a doctoring sit-com, and *The Doctor*, a fly-on-the-surgery-wall show about a medic. *Doctor Finlay* has just finished on Friday nights, where repeats of *Casualty* remain. A few years ago — when there was a sudden rush of TV programmes about nannies — someone said that it reflected the public school background of the people who ran television. The new set of executives — Yentob, Jackson, Dyke — are more grammar and secondary modern boys, but obviously they liked to play doctors and nurses during their formative years.

'Square Eyes'

I-BSkyB

SUN

A GIRL of two who plunged 30 feet from flats in Romania survived when a ground-floor satellite dish broke her fall.

SPOT

The Sun

Sky One is best loved telly channel

EXCLUSIVE by MATTHEW WRIGHT

The Sun

To be honest, I have no idea whether what Martyn Lewis says is valid or not. I find the BBC News overblown and unwatchable. During the day I dip into Sky News...

RICHARD LITTLEJOHN
The Sun

CONTRIBUTORS: Jon Holden, M. Turner, Alan McNee.

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.

MEDIA NEWS

BBC PLANNERS have devised a brilliant scheme to "save" Radio 4's late-night news show, *The World Tonight*: they will "seamlessly weld" it — ie lose it — in the new rolling news network.

New editor Ann Koch has already been arm-twisted into surrendering her production offices to make space for the new monster, while producers, reporters and presenters are axed.

The final engineering will be completed in October when *The World Tonight*'s airtime slot is cut from 45 minutes to 30. Then the show will be relaunched as *Ann Koch's Half Hour* (*geddit*?).

WHEN Andrew Snell was removed as editor of *Omnibus*, the BBC1 arts flagship, he was told the programme had become too geared to plugging new projects.

The new editor — novelist and Faber and Faber author Nigel Williams — came from BBC2's *Bookmark*, where he had been famed for his eagerness to plug books published by Faber and Faber.

Interestingly, Williams has hired Anne Ellitson, previously with the Fabber publicity department. One of Williams's first projects is an, er, film about Andrew Lloyd Webber's upcoming *Sunset Boulevard* — produced and directed by Alan Benson, a former employee of Lloyd Webber's Really Useful Theatre Company.

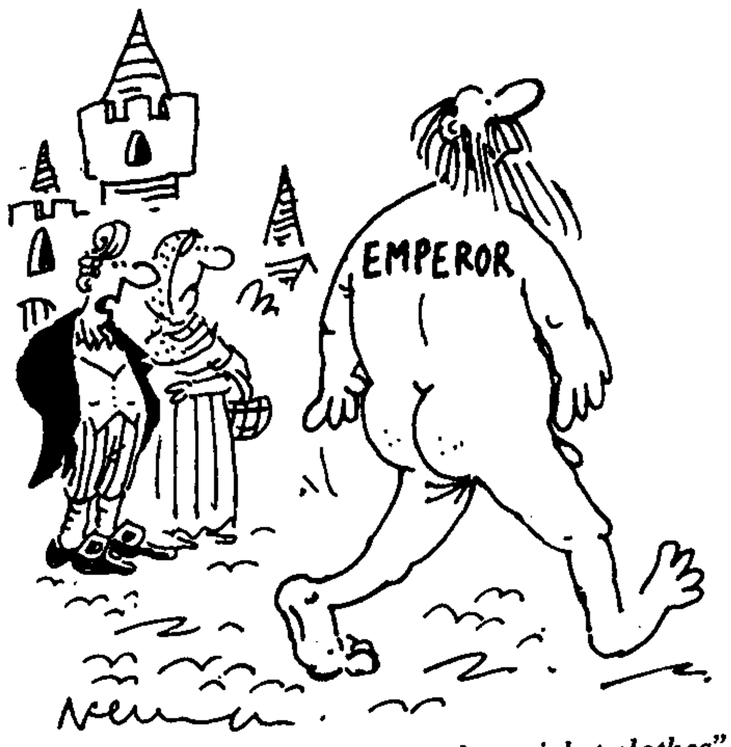
THERE HAS been much amusement at ITN's Gray's Inn Road HQ where a copy of a fascinating memo recently found its way on to noticeboards.

It was from John Flewin, manager of the Westminster Television Centre at Four Millbank, to his head of department Terry Shore. Copied to financial controller Clive Timms, it concerns trench digging and surface reinstatement work done by Westminster city council while laying cables between Four Millbank and other buildings.

Flewin, a graduate of West Herts Management College, was "originally given a verbal estimate of £600" and "authorised this payment ahead of the work." Unfortunately the "job became slightly complicated" and Westminster city council has put in a bill for £33,326. Flewin says he is contesting the bill, but points out that there "is no provision in WTC accounts from last year for this kind of debt." Since Millbank is a cost centre, the easiest way to claw back the money may well be to cut a member of staff.

This could hardly come at a worse time for ITN. But even as it grapples with cost-cutting, the company is still spending foolishly. It has just paid £4 million to transfer the ITN newsroom with all its electronic and computer equipment from the first floor to the ground floor. The move, which was the brainchild of Bob Phillis, since departed to become deputy director-general of the Beeb, has already been judged a failure, with complaints that there is not enough room for the operation at its location.

CORPORATION STREET W.12
An everyday story of Broadcasting Folk
DOWNING STREET
"WHAT'S UP, BIRT?"
"PEOPLE ARE SAYING I SHOULD FIND ANOTHER JOB"
"WHY?"
"THEY SAY I'M DISCREDITED AND I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THE BBC STANDS FOR"
"WELL, THERE'S ONLY ONE THING FOR IT..."
BAR
BAR
"WE'VE FOUND THE NEXT CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS!"
"Trebles for the DG and a 1½% pay rise all round!"
1900 Ch. Lafite-Rothschild
FREEBIE JAUNTS AT THE LICENCE PAYER'S EXPENSE
HONG KONG, NEW YORK, PARIS, ETC, ETC, ETC...
Ken Pyne



"It's the Emperor's new one-day cricket clothes"

JOHN BIRT'S survey of BBC employees seems certain to fail to win back credibility among a highly demoralised workforce.

The signed letter accompanying the 26-page — yes, 26-page — questionnaire sent to one in three of the corporation's 19,000 staff promises: "We are committed to taking the results of this survey very seriously and we will publish them in detail..."

Seriously enough to resign if told to do so by a clear majority of respondents? Hardly. The multiple choice, 1-5 scale format is designed to restrict opportunities for genuine comment to a minimum. Predictably, more than a few questionnaires have been returned with abuse scrawled all over them; page 8, which listed "becoming more open and accountable" as one of the BBC's four key aims, attracted a number of interesting comments.

What galls staff most is the cost — £80,000 — which comes at a time when "budget cut" has become a management mantra. If Birt really wants to know what his staff think of him and his organisation, he need only tour any BBC building and look at the noticeboards. They are littered with articles about and photographs of him and his governors, all edited, commented on and "improved". When the derisory 1.5% pay offer was announced, coinciding with Birt's 25% £40,000 pay rise, one graffiti artist asked: "Is he taking the piss, or what?" Even the in-house magazine *Ariel*, which staff note "always washes white", has been forced to print the odd criticism — although only from retired staff.

IN FACT the whole questionnaire exercise, a glossy brochure with its own special pencil, is symbolic of the lunacies of Birtism.

Here are a few more to be going on with:

- BBC cameramen can no longer have their own cameras. Instead they must take them from stores for each assignment. This has angered them because they like to work with equipment they know and trust, and has been justified because of cost control.
- *Ariel* has been carrying profiles of the board of management. Patricia Hodgson, director of policy and planning, had three photo sessions (cost born by the Beeb) before she was satisfied with her photo. She also insisted on copy approval (the profile was written by Peter Fiddick), while anyone wanting an accurate staff list for her department will find it difficult as "policy and planning" is expanding fast.
- The number of BBC employees in the upper pay scales has increased by approximately 300.

AS WE predicted, the sun has set on Sunset Radio, Manchester's nonsensical "ethnic" station.

Unimpressed with the stream of disinformation, dodgy accounts and bad Marvin Gaye records pouring out of the station's Olympic City HQ, the normally-toothless radio licensing authority has imposed the severest penalty it can and withdrawn four-year-old Sunset's licence.

Sunset got off to a bad start under its first management team, with station founder and DJ Mike Shaft (*sic*) sacked, reinstated and resigning ad infinitum. Things went further downhill when ownership passed into the hands of Manchester businessman Hassan Al-Jaizani, whose efforts at running the station were hampered by a court injunction banning him from trading shares due to outstanding debts to Sunset's creditors.

The licensing authority also noticed that various shareholder groups with dodgy names didn't exist.

Meanwhile Al-Jaizani continues to ward off pursuers with his usual cunning. His absence from a recent court case over a property deal was explained by a doctor's note claiming he had had a brain seizure. It did not prevent him from having lunch with a journalist at Heathrow airport's Garfunkel's before flying back to Manchester.

HACKWATCH GOES THROUGH THE KEYHOLE with Eve Pollard

MIRROR Group Newspapers, already short of money, has had to pay out almost £100,000 to avoid being embarrassed in court by former *Sunday Mirror* editor Eve Pollard.

That is what it has cost the company to persuade the paper's former assistant editor, Peter Miller, to settle the industrial tribunal and high court actions arising from his sacking by La Bollard in 1990.

So, sadly, we shall be deprived of the treat of another courtroom clash between Bollard and Miller's redoubtable barrister, Simeon Maskrey. At the original industrial tribunal hearing two years ago, extensively covered in the *Eye*, Bollard was given a two-day mauling by Maskrey which ended with her rushing to the ladies' loo and declaring: "If I ever need a divorce I want that man." A startled Maskrey had to be reassured that the only services Bollard had in mind were of a legal nature.

Bollard had told the tribunal that there was nothing unreasonable in taking away Miller's secretary, his office and his electric light; she also insisted it was not a demotion to ban him from every editorial conference and give someone else his job. The tribunal, unimpressed, stopped the case forthwith and found in Miller's favour without even hearing his evidence. An affronted Bollard announced that she would appeal against the decision, with the enthusiastic support of the *Mirror*'s then proprietor, Robert Maxwell (*Who he? — Ed.*)

The appeal, which took a scandalous two years to reach the courts, was due to be heard a fortnight ago. But at the last minute the new management at the Mirror Group, having belatedly read the tribunal's damning judgment, decided to avoid further humiliation by handing Miller a fat cheque instead.

All hope is not lost, however, for a second confrontation between Simeon Maskrey and Lady Lloyd. For Miller's solicitors, Wedlake Bell, are now acting for former *Sunday Express* literary editor Graham Lord, who was on the receiving end of a similar dose of the Pollard charm. If Lord's compensation claim is not settled beforehand, milady will be grilled in the witness box by her old foe Maskrey.

Miller, too, is said to be planning further litigation. One likely target is Charles "Experienced" Golding, Bollard's former deputy at the *Sunday Mirror* who now fills the same role at the *Sunday Express*. Two years ago, at Bollard's behest, Golding set up a "hit squad" to dig for dirt on Miller which could be used to justify his dismissal. They claimed to have found evidence that Miller owned a travel company in America and a vineyard in Australia, both of which he was allegedly plugging in the *Sunday Mirror*. Alas, neither story was true. Miller may now invest some of his loot in a defamation suit against Golding.

As if all this weren't enough to give Bollard and Golding palpitations, two weeks ago they had the shock of their lives when Miller strolled nonchalantly into the editor's office at the *Sunday Express*, having somehow avoided the security guards at the front desk. "Hello Eve, hello Charles, I've just come to thank you," he told the flabbergasted pair, brandishing his £100,000 cheque in their faces. "I couldn't have managed it without you." He then walked out, pausing on the way to explain to a security manager that La Bollard was an old friend whom he had wanted to thank for a big favour.

By now the fourth floor of the *Express* building was in a state of uproar. The ashen-faced Golding looked as if he might burst into tears, but Bollard was in full cry, threatening to sack the entire security force, the news and picture desks and her secretary. Then she fell into a swoon and began hyperventilating. Colleagues were so alarmed at her condition that they summoned her husband, *Daily Express* editor Sir Nick Lloyd, to come and loosen her corset.

Her ladyship was no sooner back on her feet and zipped into place than she was demanding round-the-clock protection. For the next three days she was followed everywhere — even to the lavatory — by two burly bodyguards. Meanwhile, the triumphant Miller chartered a plane and flew off for a weekend's skiing in Val D'Isere.

HUNT NEWS

ANTI-HUNT protestors arrived at Guildford magistrates' court recently to await the scheduled hearing of charges against John Funnell, master of foxhounds with the notorious Surrey Union hunt.

Funnell, who has two suspended prison sentences from a previous incident, was due to appear on a charge of assault and an offence under section 5 of the public order act. If he were to have been convicted of the assault charge, this would have invoked the suspended prison sentences.

The anti-hunt protestors were naturally disappointed to learn that the case was not listed after all. Further inquiries with the clerk's office revealed that the crown prosecution service had offered no case against Funnell on the assault charge, even though a police officer had witnessed an assault on a saboteur. What is more, the section 5 offence had been rushed through the court a few weeks earlier. Funnell had pleaded guilty to the section 5 charge and was fined £61 having declared a disposable income of only £4 a week.

'Reynard'

POLICE 5

REVELATIONS in the last *Eye* about the revenge tactics of West Midlands police provoked a swift response: officers have been told to find the *Eye*'s informant and inflict similar punishments to those we described.

Chief constable Ron "Biffo" Hadfield was angered partly by our revelations regarding the drink-drive prosecution of former Supt Martin Burton; partly by revelations of Ugandan practices among senior West Midlands officers — but above all by our revelation of the genesis of his name, Biffo.

The *Eye* would like to remind readers that Mr Hadfield's deputy is Richard Adams. It would also like to remind readers that Biffo stands for Big Ignorant Fat Fucker from Oldham.

Sally Deedes

WHAT DOES the Royal Mail's "Customer Care" service mean? Not a lot.

Customer Care triumphed with a letter concerning the rail strike on 2 April. The letter dated 31 March was to warn customers that although others would have difficulties on the day, the gallant Royal Mail would operate normally. Indeed it did: but the letter, dated 31 March, was not posted until 2 April and only arrived on 5 April — three days after the strike.

Last week a reader who lives in Bristol, posted a letter by special delivery which did not arrive the next day. When she complained she was told that special delivery did not guarantee the letter would arrive the next day. It guaranteed the *possibility* of it arriving the next day. So now we know.

ENERGY

POWERGEN, junior partner in the privatised cartel of electricity generators, has picked Sir Colin Southgate as its new chairman.

The appointment may raise eyebrows as Sir Colin ignores the "Cadbury rules", which were formulated to end City sleaze, and also runs a major supplier in the electrical and electronics arena where PowerGen is a customer.

Sir Colin is already chairman and chief executive of Thorn EMI, a dual post he will combine with the new PowerGen job. PowerGen says that in such cases its "normal business criteria" must be met in dealings with the other company. But from now on, every PowerGen manager buying anything from an electric light to a computer maintenance contract will know that their boss is also superboss of one of the top suppliers in that area.

He is a superboss because he has the two top jobs at Thorn EMI, even though such "doubling-up" was the principal target of the Cadbury committee on "corporate governance", which stressed the need for separate chairmen and chief executives.

PowerGen complies with this code, as does the Bank of England, which wants to free the City from the bad odour created by BCCI, Maxwell and the stratospheric salaries and pay-offs for "top" people, et al. Sir Colin, strangely, is also a director of the Bank — even though he ignores the Cadbury rules and intends to go on doing so.

SCOTTISH Nuclear has had to abandon an advertising campaign, part of a £1.9 million promotion, after misleading the public.

The company was found guilty by the Advertising Standards Authority after it claimed that "alternatives like solar power can provide no more than 10 percent of our energy".

This was challenged by the Green party in Scotland who pointed out that hydro-electric power already supplied more than 10 percent of Scotland's electricity.

Scottish Nuclear tried to claim they were referring specifically to solar power (though even that would be a dubious claim as solar energy is almost limitless). The ASA ruled that the advertisement could be taken as referring to all alternatives and was misleading. They noted that it had been withdrawn and warned Scottish Nuclear to "clarify" similar claims in future.

WHEN Asil Nadir wants to rebuild his fortune in Britain, he only has to write to the Office of Electricity Regulation (Offer) and ask for a licence to supply electricity. It will be granted.

One has already been given to Marc Rich, even though Rich has been described as the most wanted white-collar criminal in the United States.

He left the US in 1983 with 65 charges out against him including racketeering, fraud, tax evasion (the largest in American history) and suchlike. From his sanctuary in Switzerland he applied for a UK licence and it was given. Business is business, after all.

PS: Rich cannot visit Britain to see how it is doing for fear of being extradited to the US.

WATER NEWS

YORKSHIRE Water chiefs have launched a £250,000 "public consultation" exercise linking the quality of the drinking water it sells to the future size of its water bills.

Yorkshire Water customers are being asked to vote on three options: to meet minimum legal standards, which will increase water bills by 40 percent, plus inflation, by the year 2000; to meet European community standards, increasing bills by 57 percent plus inflation; or to meet higher standards earlier, including ending the use of aluminium in water treatment, which would send bills rocketing by 79 percent, plus inflation.

Doubtless to the joy of shareholders, the private monopoly's customers do not have the option of voting to pay for such improvements out of the £72 million profit Yorkshire Water made in just six months up to last September.

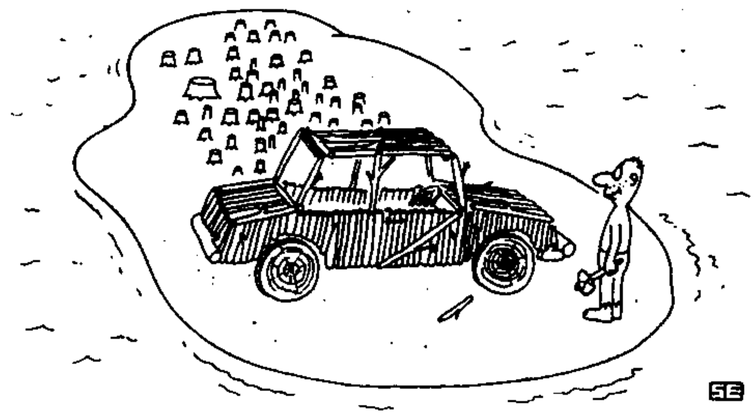
ROADS

THE government has received a setback in its attempt to pander to the road lobby and waste millions of pounds on another new bypass after one of its public inquiry inspectors misbehaved.

Lugg Meadows, a site of special scientific interest near Hereford, is Britain's largest Lammas meadow and is still managed on the medieval pattern. Consequently, the department of transport wanted to drive a huge new road through it.

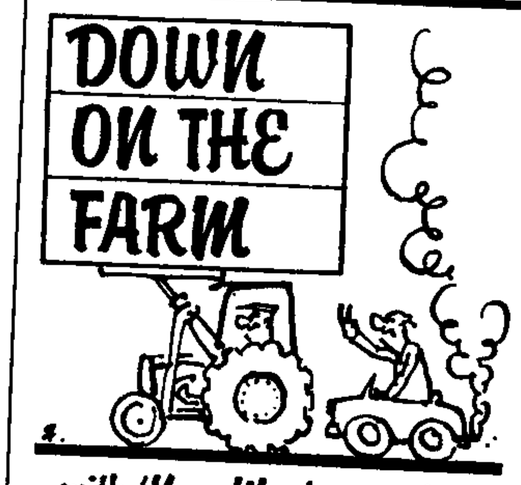
Astonishingly, the inspector's report following the public inquiry into the Hereford eastern bypass stated that the DoT had supplied unreliable statistics on future traffic figures. The department had also made significant changes to its proposals *after* the public consultation period and, furthermore, had produced misleading evidence on the impact on the landscape and nearby properties, the inspector decided.

His report has forced the DoT to back down for now. But after a road close to, or through, the Lugg Meadows was judged to be environmentally unacceptable, the DoT said the secretaries of state



would consider the possibility of a route... "close to, or through, the Lugg Meadows".

The flaws cited by the inspector were pretty much par for the course in new road proposals, nearly all of which get steamrollered through objections. What was significantly different here was that the inspector was about to retire. It so happens that another inspector who came to similar conclusions about the A36 link road in Bath was also conducting his last inquiry.



with 'New Muckspreader'

FEW STRANGER tales have come out of Britain's countryside in recent years than that of MAFF's compulsory sheep-dipping programme to fight parasitic scab, which can destroy adult sheep.

The only chemicals permitted are organo-phosphorous compounds — developed from second world war nerve gas — with the result that several hundred farmers have developed symptoms ranging from blinding headaches to suicidal depression. An unknown number have died.

Despite this, scab has shown no sign of diminishing. So MAFF's ingenious chief vet, Keith Meldrum (see *Eyes passim*), has eliminated it from the list of notifiable diseases: officially the problem no longer exists.

Before toasting another MAFF victory, however, we must remember that sheep — unofficially — are still getting this wretched scab. Farmers continue to fight it with the only weapon allowed them... and continue to suffer. Meldrum will not permit the use of a much safer alternative, BHC. It was banned after the French threatened to test sheep meat for BHC residues — a transparent bid to limit imports of British lamb. Even though the French use the product in their sheep dips, it appears MAFF will not risk our burgeoning trade with France.

The curious thing is that most exports are of lambs too young to need dipping. So why does Meldrum continue to allow British farmers to endanger their health? Perhaps because they are only being poisoned "unofficially" this problem doesn't exist either.

THE SHARP increase in live lamb exports (brought about by John Gummer's removal of the ban on live sales earlier this year) is having a predictable effect on jobs. Last week the FMC abattoir at Torrington, North Devon, laid off 90 staff.

The immediate causes of this "rationalisation" are more complex than simply a cut in sheep "throughput". The weakness of the pound and the removal of sheep subsidies have also had their effect, as have the increased overheads resulting from Gummer's sympathetic implementation of the fresh meat directive. The most important cause, however, is that large abattoirs, under pressure from their generous supermarket clients, have so reduced payments to producers that farmers now find it more profitable to export live animals, even though they cost three times more to ship than carcases.

Strange, isn't it, that supermarkets, which try so hard to sell their "caring" image to concerned urban customers, have engineered a situation whereby our lambs are trucked to their deaths in foreign abattoirs and our workers lose their jobs?

THE SKILL with which Gummer defends his destruction of Britain's slaughterhouses was evident in last week's *Food Programme* on Radio 4.

He refused to discuss details of any slaughterhouses with presenter Derek Cooper as he "could not discuss individual cases". Yet nor would he discuss his policy of destroying a major British industry with Margaret Daly, MEP for the South West, because "nothing comes of talking generalities".

Instead Gummer challenged Daly and Cooper to supply details of the individual cases which he so publicly refused to discuss. These he promised to take up. Seasoned Gummer-watchers will recognise this artful ploy. When he made a similar offer on the *Country File* programme last December, he was sent case histories of 15 rural businesses, mostly slaughterhouses, which his policies were destroying.

Responding to a letter accompanying the evidence, in which it was suggested he would probably ignore what had been sent, Gummer wrote angrily: "When I said that I would investigate any case, I meant it", adding that he would reply personally when he had looked into all the cases. That was in February. No reply has yet been received.

Old Macdonald

ALBERT

NOBODY CARES MORE PASSIONATELY ABOUT WILD LIFE SURVIVAL THAN FARMERS DO!
BALLS!
LISTEN SON! I SPEND BLOODY HOURS OF MY VALUABLE TIME EVERY WEEK DEDICATED TO IT, AN' I'M TELLIN' YOU.....
YOU PRESS FIRE FOR AN EXTRA LIFE
BAR
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

NOOKS and CORNERS

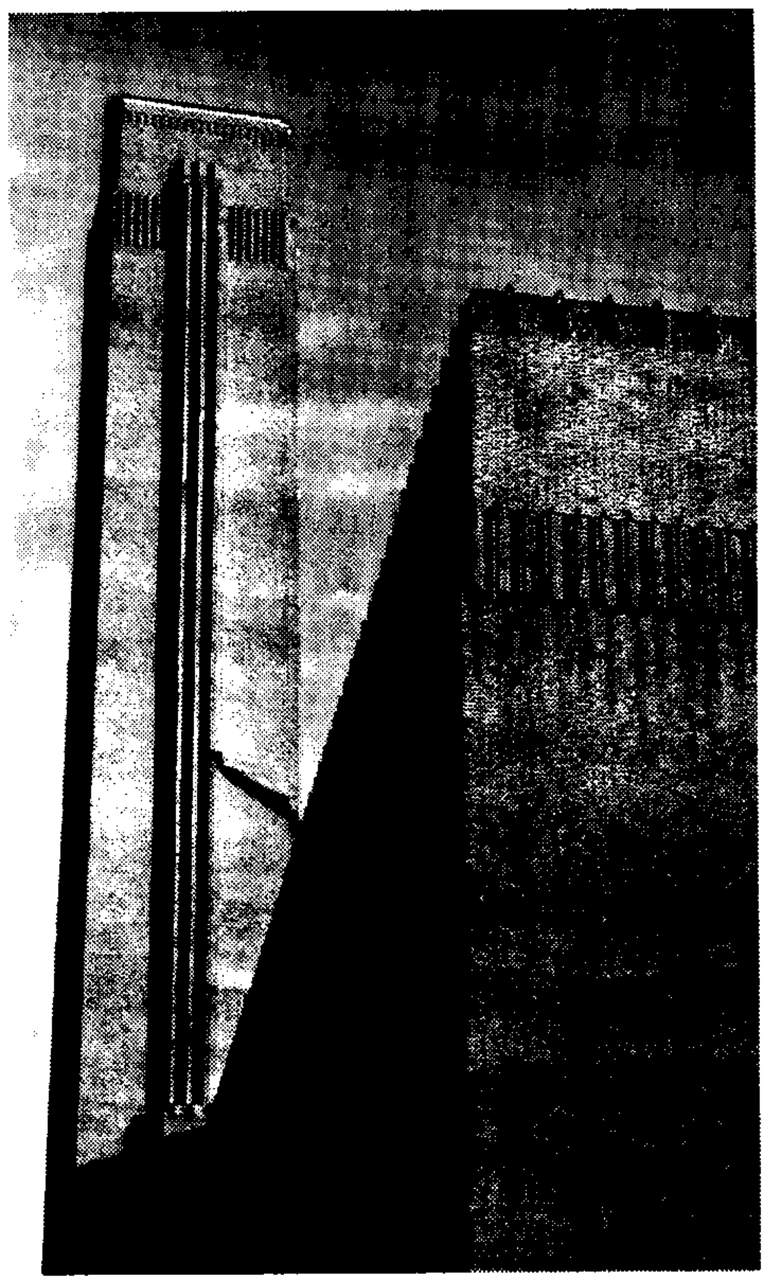
ON THE south bank of the Thames opposite the City of London stands a disused oil-burning electricity generating station. Perhaps it should never have been built, but it was — and now it is redundant.

It is a huge, solid and sound structure which could make a suitable home, say, for the Science Museum's collection of machinery or for the Tate Gallery's modern paintings. More to the point, this structure is *beautiful*. For this is no ordinary power station but a triumphant architectural gesture; a final Romantic protest against the ubiquitous tyranny of the "style of our day and age".

Bankside power station is the last and most magnificent "cathedral of power": the work of that great architect Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, creator of Liverpool cathedral, many fine churches and the late, lamented red telephone box. It was designed in 1947, completed in 1963 and closed in 1980. But although the turbines are now silent, the superb walls of overlapping planes of beautiful brick still stand, enhanced by what John Betjeman called Scott's "jazz modern" detail. Bankside has all the grandeur of the monuments of the ancient world seen through the eyes of Frank Lloyd Wright.

Bankside power station is not listed. This is a scandal. Nice Mr Brooke has shown he is serious about the listing of post-war architecture by recently accepting English Heritage's recommendations for educational buildings. But not Bankside. In fact, Bankside has been proposed for and turned down *three times*. It was naturally among the first 50 recommendations made by English Heritage back in 1988, which were then whittled down to 17 by that buffoon Lord Caithness; it has been proposed twice since. The department of the environment declines to give a reason for its adamant refusal. This is not surprising, for the government *apparatchiks* in Marsham Street could not possibly think of one.

For if Battersea power station was worth listing, Bankside is worth it ten times over. Battersea was listed by Michael Heseltine in 1981 following Nigel Broackes's weekend demolition of the Firestone factory. At Battersea in the 1930s, Giles Scott was merely architect for the exterior and he could not change the configuration of the four chimneys,



which he disliked. At Bankside, Scott was in complete control and he gathered up all the flues into one great central *campanile* of brick which looks across the river to the dome of St Paul's.

In short, Bankside power station is the ultimate brick Temple of Power and a major post-war work by one of the great British architects of the 20th century. The fact that Battersea has been wrecked by giving it to Mrs Thatcher's friend, John Broome, for his abortive fun palace project is neither here nor there. The architectural quality of Bankside is transcendent and, with imagination and political will, it could find a new life.

But no. The government declines to list Bankside — and has now added injury to insult by granting a certificate of immunity from listing — simply because the building has been handed over to Nuclear Electric, the unprofitable lame duck that survives one of Mrs Thatcher's many glories, the privatised electricity industry.

It has been given, of course, not to use but merely as an asset to strip, a site to sell for a commercial development. This is a scandal as it represents self-interested political interference in the planning process, aided by the philistine myopia of Southwark borough council, which hopes for pretty trees and twee little houses somewhere on the site. But it is London's, and Britain's loss.

In other countries things are done differently. In Paris, the huge market hall for the abattoir de la Villette built in 1969 was redundant as soon as it was built. But rather than demolish the structure, the city of Paris converted it into the stunning Cité des Sciences which now stands in the middle of the new Parc de la Villette. If Britain were a civilised country with a modicum of vision, Bankside — on its splendid central London site (next to the Globe Theatre) — would simply be transferred to the Tate, which is looking for new premises. After all, Bankside was built by and belonged to the nationalised electricity industry — that is, us — while the Tate is a public museum. What could be simpler?

But no. There is no such thing as a free lunch: Nuclear Electric claims it is happy to *sell* Bankside to the Tate, if the gallery can come up with an acceptable commercial offer.

Very soon demolition contractors will take down part of the west wall of Bankside, ostensibly to strip out the machinery but in fact to render the building useless and so ensure its eventual total demolition. Never mind the architecture: this is just a wicked waste of an asset, of built resources and material, of constructed capital, and it stinks.

'Piloti'

Bankers Part I

THE American Express Bank (Amex) in London has been accused of serious irregularities involving its foreign exchange dealing operations on behalf of its investment clients, the *Eye* can reveal.

The Bank of England — whose regulatory efforts in the matter have also raised questions — has been asked to investigate the claims of a former Amex employee who alleges that the company's trading operations are rigged against individual investors in one of its currency funds.

The allegations, taken up by Labour MPs Austin Mitchell and Giles Radice, and by the former Tory MP Anthony Beaumont Dark, concentrate on the way Amex handles its clients' investments alongside its own dealing operations. It is claimed that the bank's practices break with its "fiduciary duties" — the bond of trust between two parties where one exercises rights and powers for the benefit of the other — part of the duty of the agent being to deal on the best possible terms for his client.

The claims against Amex revolve around the intricate way in which profit is generated during frenetic dealings on the currency market. The sums involved are very large indeed, and in Giles Radice's words may amount to a "major scandal".

The allegations of irregularities come from 33-year-old Evan Souliotis, who joined Amex in 1990 as a fund manager for AEB International Currency Fund. He became concerned about the fairness and integrity with which the fund was treated within the organisation. Fund investors are told in the prospectus that the fund places all its foreign transactions through its own spot dealers who, Mr Souliotis found, frequently gave poor (uncompetitive) prices involving abnormally wide "spreads" — the difference between the price at which they buy and sell — and charged an undisclosed transaction fee on virtually every deal.

Note for laypersons: spot dealers operate a market in foreign currencies to would-be buyers and sellers and make their profit by way of the "spread". The wider it is the greater the profit they make. They offer figures to the customers which include the buying and selling rate at the same time — this way the caller does not have to disclose whether he or she wishes to buy or sell. For instance, if the buying rate were at 1.6110 and the selling rate at 1.6115 in the dollar/deutschmark exchange, the last two digits of each rate would be quoted 10/15. The five point difference represents the spread — and the wider the spread the bigger the profit for the dealer.

Mr Souliotis explained: "Under normal circumstances, had I been given such ludicrously bad pricing, I would never have thought to ring them back. But I was a captive customer. Amex monopolised the fund's access to the market thus violating their claims that they conduct all dealing with the fund on an arm's length basis."

This policy has been underlined in an internal bank memo which included dealing commissions as a source of revenue — a point not mentioned in the prospectus seen by any customer and technically illegal, because it adds *two points* to the final price of any transaction and serves to misappropriate fund (i.e. client) capital into the dealer's "speculative trading book" in which he records his daily profit and loss.

If, for example, Mr Souliotis had bought US$10 million and agreed to buy at DM1.6115, after the purchase he would be required to pay the spot dealer an additional 2 points (i.e. DM1.6117), neatly transferring DM2,000 in one single trade to the speculative book and away from the clients of the fund. Souliotis maintains that he was required to pay this extra charge on virtually every trade he made with the dealers.

The fact that the two-point charge was concealed in this way prevented its detection during routine audit (or possibly investigation) of the fund's booked trade, and as it is done by way of these normal market transactions between the firm's fund and its own dealers, any losses incurred are veiled by the normal occasional losses of a high risk fund.

At first Mr Souliotis decided to restructure the trading practices of the fund with the objective of salvaging the fund's reputation. Due to disaffected clients the share capital of the fund had dwindled from around US$18 million to approximately $8m. In so doing he produced the most consistently profitable month-to-month trading record since the fund's inception in 1988. Nonetheless, he became increasingly unpopular as his reduced trading volumes and strict control of fund pricing practices sharply decreased the profits that Amex's London spot desk earned from its guaranteed trading relationships with the fund.

In late February 1991 he was told by the London treasurer Mike James that he "did not fit in" and was asked to leave. Since he left the fund in a better condition than when he joined, it is hard to see what criterion the bank used for dispensing with his services.

● *Next issue: Part II — Mr Souliatis fights back.*

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

TAFF-ELY

LOUD rumblings in the valleys where chargepayers are questioning the right of Taff-Ely's deputy leader, Clayton Jones, to remain in office after the Plaid Cymru councillor was disqualified from being a company director.

Jones, who as chairman of the council's social services and direct labour committees is responsible for looking after more than £10 million of public money, has spent the last few years running bus companies in south Wales. But his fleet has not been too popular with local chapel-goers.

Following a series of complaints by users, over a period of roughly five years the transport commissioners held 14 inquiries into Jones' companies. They revoked his licence after a nasty accident in 1989 when the brakes failed on one of his buses in a Rhondda street, when nine people were injured and a woman lost her leg.

In the ensuing court case Jones pleaded guilty on behalf of his Shamrock company to owning a vehicle with faulty brakes. Although the company was fined £1,500, nearly four years after the accident the bill hadn't been paid. Now, the official receiver has barred Jones from being a company director for five years after a court heard how another of his companies, Drysilver, went bust leaving debts of more than £140,000.

Jones, meanwhile, had transferred some of the company's assets — 38 buses worth £200,000 — to another company leaving various creditors empty-handed. He had also sold a bus, bought with a £15.000 government grant, without telling the Welsh Office.

Even though a number of parents in the Rhondda won't let their children use Jones's buses to go to school, Jones's Plaid Cymru colleagues, more concerned with the safety of their fragile coalition than assuaging the fears of voters, have given Jones full backing.

BIRMINGHAM

A NEW CROP of car crime graduates has emerged from Birmingham's children's homes — with tragic consequences.

Readers will recall the escape of 14-year-old Sally Anne Cattell from the St John's home in Erdington in March. She later died at the wheel of a stolen car. Two St John students who were with her lived to steal another day.

A few days ago, the home allowed out three other youngsters who went on the rampage. They stole a car and drove at high speed across the city before piling it into a taxi and a roundabout. Not being outdone, two boys recently escaped from the Bournbrook and Brooklands homes in Selly Park, stole a Metro and smashed into another car in nearby Halesowen. The injured driver is suing the city's social services department.

At Oakhill in Harborne youngsters prefer rioting to cars. Last week a dozen barricaded themselves into the home and stripped it of fittings, which they hurled at staff and police. Earlier they had been sniffing glue — something so common that the mostly untrained staff gave up months ago trying to stop them from doing it. Eventually police in riot gear broke in.

The response of Najma Hafeez, wildly ambitious social services chairperson, was to choose the day of the riot to announce her resignation. Not, it seems, out of shame, but out of realisation that the constant embarrassments might make a safe parliamentary seat impossible. The resignation preceded by hours the Labour group's annual elections. Next day she was reborn as chair of community affairs.

CONGRATULATIONS to young Andrew Howell on his rocket-like rise through Birmingham city council's ruling Labour group.

Elected to the council just two years ago, until now he has been chairman of nothing and noted mainly for his complete averageness and ability to toe the party line. But suddenly he has been made chairman of the city's education committee — the biggest in England, with spending powers totalling nearly £500 million — even though he has never even sat on said committee.

Naturally his mysterious elevation has nothing to do with having Lord Howell, formerly common old Denis Howell, the ex-MP for Birmingham Small Heath, as his father. Nor anything to do with Den's best mateship with city Labour leader Sir "Dick" Knowles. Young Andrew has repeatedly renounced his parentage as he created an impeccable dossier of left-wing credentials prior to selection as a Labour candidate.

Strangely, once on the council the young Howell transmuted somewhat: from red-in-tooth-and-claw firebrand who dressed to the left and was beloved of his grass-roots colleagues, to the kind of sober-suited moderate smoothie so beloved by the party hiearchy and his dad.

MURKEYSIDE

LIVERPOOL city council isn't the only one on Murkeyside that loses large sums of taxpayers' money. Last year's Tall Ships musical extravaganza featuring Montserrat Caballe and the King and Queen of Spain (*Eye* 801) lost £554,000.

About half the money is owed to the publicly-funded Merseyside development corporation, and local firms who make up the other 32 creditors are extremely angry: they believed the MDC was underwriting the event.

Lumbered with unpaid bills, they now know the flop was the responsibility of a one-man outfit: Brendan Carroll, who also happened to do the MDC's PR. Carroll was allowed to stage the show despite having no experience of running such a large fiasco. He set up a company — which had no assets — for £2, and now admits that "perhaps I was overambitious".

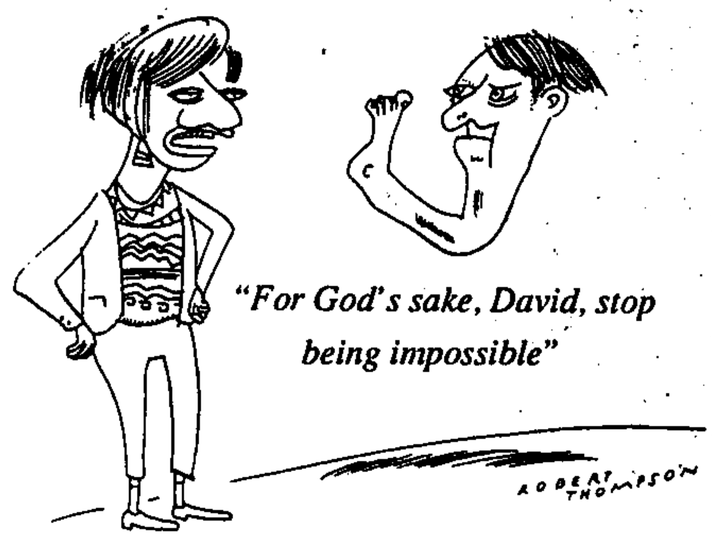
Carroll even managed to end up owing himself money, as his PR firm Carroll Communications is a major creditor of the defunct Carroll Promotions. However, he didn't attend a recent creditors' meeting to point this fact out. Instead he was at an important PR conference in Prague.

Labour's Peter Kilfoyle and Liberal Democrat David Alton have unanimously condemned the event's mismanagement. One reason the losses were so high was the huge cost of entertaining businessmen and other worthies at the taxpayers' expense.

LEEDS

GENEROUS council taxpayers in Leeds are paying for their elected representatives to leave the self-styled "capital of the north" this summer for a day's junket to the Tower of London.

All 99 members of the Labour-controlled authority are urged to join the beano on the pretext of visiting the Royal Armouries, which transfer to Leeds in 1996. As well as transport and other costs, councillors have voted themselves a modest attendance and subsistence allowance for the trip of £30-a-head. There are no district council elections this year.



"For God's sake, David, stop being impossible"

BENT

SUMMER madness has broken out in Britain's barmiest borough, where the Tories are clinging desperately to power after the resignation of ex-Labour convert Judith Harper.

By the kind of coincidence for which Bent is renowned, Harper quit her seat only hours before town hall officials were due to question her about alleged housing fraud. Officers wanted to probe her on allegations that she obtained a three-bedroom housing association property, as a homeless town hall nominee, while owning a flat in the borough. The dossier has now gone to Inspector Knacker.

Fortunately for the Tories, Harper's departure clashed with the arrival of two new supporters: councillors Harshad Barot and M.D. Patel, both of whom started their municipal careers as Labour representatives before going independent two years ago.

Barot, *Eye* readers will recall, had accused Labour of failing to support his Bent Asian Professionals Association, which owed the Tory council thousands of pounds in unpaid loans. After leaving the Labour group and voting with the Tories as an "independent" the group's debts were magically frozen.

HOUNSLOW

NOT CONTENT with the problems which have befallen his borough's adult education courses (*Eye* 819), Hounslow's mayor Harbans Kanwal is embroiled in a furious row over voting irregularities in the local Feltham and Heston Labour party.

Kanwal is being investigated by his Walworth Road party HQ after claims that he was only reselected as chairman of his local branch party when 47 people tried to join on the night voting took place.

The mass entryist tactics are part of a wider battle between Sikhs and Muslims for control of Feltham and Heston at the expense of non-Asian sitting MP Alan Keen. The would-be members had no membership cards, nor had they been verified as bona fide new recruits. Nevertheless more than £600 was produced to cover their membership fees.

Kanwal is also being investigated by the ombudsman over complaints that he solicited support from fellow councillors to push through a planning application to demolish a toilet on the Great West Road and build an office block. A committee of investigating councillors has discovered that in personally urging two Tory councillors to back the scheme Kanwal failed to mention that he knew the applicant.

HUSBAND

can you read the number plate on that car?
TEST CENTRE
No
DRIVING EXAM
No! Is your eyesight very bad?
My eyesights fine. I just can't read

Letters

Bull doze

Sir,

Your piece was innocently offensive. I am not a "Spokesman" for the Islamic Republic of Iran. The wealth and property of my wife, Tahere's, family in Iran has well and truly gone. Their home in Tehran has been bulldozed and their properties in Birjand are now public parks or Municipal Council Headquarters. Such are the fruits of revolution.

We should mind, not you. I have always read PRIVATE EYE *since its creation and will continue to do so. But please allow me to care about Iran without attributing motives that are as impractical as they are untrue.*

Yours faithfully,
PETER TEMPLE-MORRIS, MP,

House of Commons, London SW1.

Branch line

Sir,

*At least our first entry in Rotten Boroughs (*EYE *819) was on a green issue.*

However even the least numerate among your readers will have trouble reconciling your claims (a) that up to 15,000 street trees in Richmond are "doomed" and (b) that the cost of replacement will be £50,000. A brief visit to a plant nursery will tell you that at least one of these figures must be wrong by a factor of ten or more.

In fact there are only 13,000 street trees in Richmond altogether. Around 12,000 are in good health but very sadly some hundreds of mainly new or small ones are affected by adverse environmental conditions, vandalism or apparent herbicide damage. Some have already been replaced and after a great deal of research substantially different methods are being adopted to maximise the chances of survival of the new stock and the continued good health of the remainder.

Yours sincerely,
MARTIN ELENGORN,

Deputy Leader of the Council, Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames.

LUVVIES

I don't look at rushes. I don't want to react to myself, I don't want to start to shape a performance. I am still too much in love with the inarticulateness of the process. The biggest fight is not to get ahead of yourself, not to decide on things.

WILLEM DAFOE
Guardian Movie Masterclass

Playing Sherlock Holmes isn't easy, says Jeremy Brett, who has been portraying Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's detective for ten years. "It's as tough as Hamlet.

"It's the stillness. The stiller I can keep the better it is, if I didn't have to breathe it would be better. It's the stillness that indicates the intellectual power."

Evening Herald, Dublin

"... a marvellous script from a marvellous book. Basically it's marvellous."

SIR JOHN MILLS
(on 'Harnessing Peacocks')
Meridian advertisement

Submitted by G. Broadway, Tom Mathews, Simon Scott.

An occasional column featuring gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

Forest fire

Sir,

*Mr South's interesting letter in reply to mine of the 14 April (*PRIVATE EYE, *7 May), has just a handful of tiny errors in it:*

FOREST has never promoted smoking: it defends the rights of smokers not to be witch-hunted; nobody, not even the greatest anti-smoker fanatic, has even said that there are 300,000 deaths in the UK from smoking-related diseases — the top figure given last year was 150,000, or 115,000 or 111,000 or anything in between, but not more; I am not a director of FOREST: I am a researcher at the moment employed by them part-time, and I was writing in my private capacity as a bouncing smoker a very long way past Mr South's sell-by date.

If smokers die before 60, why are the very heavy smoking Japanese the longest lived people in the world, and the Greeks the longest lived in Europe and the heaviest cigarette smoking people in the world? Did Mr South get this figure from the same place as the 300,000?

I notice that Mr South cannot deny any of the claims of the benefits of smoking made in my original letter, even with the use of his remarkable statistics.

Yours faithfully,
J.S. HATTON (MRS),

Teddington, Middx.

Rizzo papers

Sir,

I was recently wondering how to put off writing an essay on diet and cancer when I read Mrs Sutton's note on the benefits of smoking. Unfortunately this drew my attention back to my essay, where I'd found references to tobacco effects.

As Mrs Sutton isn't a man (or so I assume) she won't have to worry about an increased risk of fatal prostate cancer when she gets to retirement age. (CANCER RES 50:6836, *Nov. 1 '90). But then I'm sure she's not worried about increased risk of breast, oral, lung, pharangeal, aesophageal and possibly colo-rectal cancers (with increased risks again if she likes more than the odd tipple of any alcoholic beverage). I think I may not be too concerned about my prospects of diabetes/Parkinsons/intestinal cancer/trigeminal neuralgia/CNS tumours/Alzheimers as she said all us non-smokers live longer — does this mean she won't survive long enough to enjoy these benefits? Are all geriatric wards full of horrors?*

Yours sincerely,
MRS S. RIZZO
(Final Year, Applied Biol UWCC),

Newport, Gwent.

Brothers in alms

Sir,

Although I find your "MPs for Hire" feature most enlightening isn't it about time you redressed the balance a bit by printing the names of all those Labour MPs in the pay of large trade unions?

Yours faithfully,
"BROTHER" MARK PARMITER,

Worcester Park, Surrey.

Logical thought

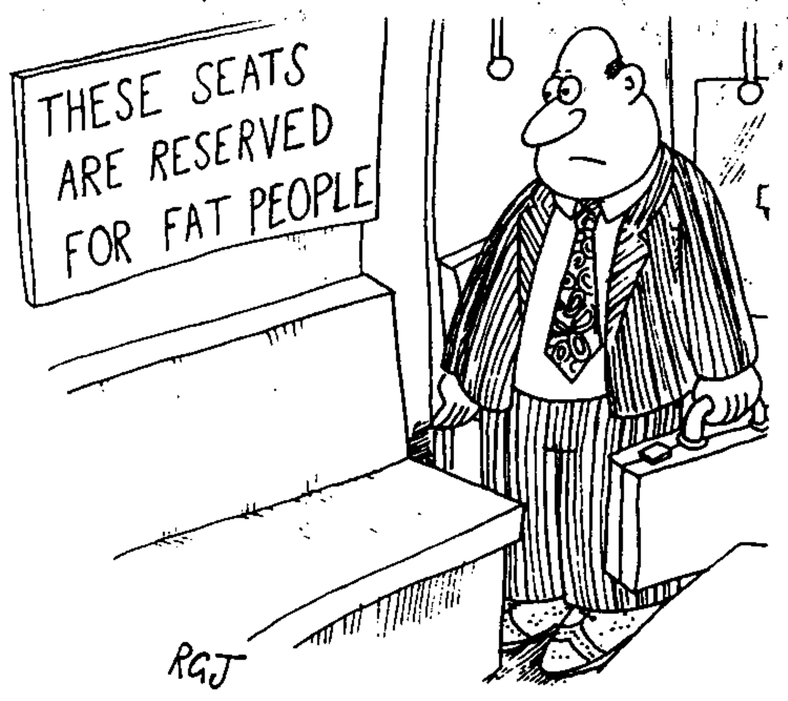
Sir,

Julian Spalding (819) has got it wrong. "Hanukah" is a Jewish religious festival during which candles are lit on a candlestick called a "menorah".

I think this should be known by a museum director whose museum is the product "of a lifetime's museological thought".

Yours sincerely,
CYRIL HOWARD,

Richmond, Surrey.



Ex cathedra

Sir,

Mr Julian Spalding's estimate of the time involved in the evolution of the St Mungo Museum in Glasgow which he describes as "a lifetime's museological thought" hardly meets the facts. A few years ago the building was to have been a Visitors' Centre for the Cathedral and only when the Friends of Glasgow Cathedral ran out of money did it fall into the hands of the Glasgow District Council and become a museum of religion.

It is true that there are fine pieces, such as the Burne Jones windows but they have most been taken from other places such as the Burrell Gallery and the People's Palace. It is a patched-up affair. The banality of the descriptive notes which accompany the exhibits beggars belief.

The building itself is an unhappy pastiche which partly obscures the view of the genuine mediaeval cathedral.

Yours faithfully,
HELEN BOVEY,

Edinburgh.

Lookalike

Monteverdi

Prince

Sir,

I wonder if any other of your readers have noticed the uncanny resemblance between that exponent of renaissance smut, Monteverdi — composer of the so-called Vespers, Magnificat and their ilk — and our modern day genius of musical creativity, Mr Prince. Are they by any remote chance related? I think we should be told.

Yours,
HAMISH KUZMINSKI,

Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Tess case

Sir,

I dislike novelists tinkering with the classics too (Literary Review, 7 May). Emma Tennant's version of "Tess" sounds a very bad idea. But to dismiss Angela Carter as "whimsical" or a "Laura Ashley feminist" (whatever that is) suggests your reviewer is as arrogant and ignorant as the tinkerers he criticises. And since when was Fay Weldon "cosy"? She always puts the wind up me — in an entertaining sort of way.

It's a shame Literary Reviewer has such a blind spot with decent women writers. It makes him sound a bit of a patronising sod.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD STONE,

London SW18.

Mein host

Sir,

I was tempted to ignore your piece on the hotel I run (May 7th, p. 27). It has so many errors and untruths as to be drivel. I decided instead to invite you to publish this.

The hotel has 202 rooms, not 120. Messrs Morgan and Pankhurst were not "put" into the same room. They specifically asked to share an en suite twin room which is 28 square metres. That's hardly tiny though probably not as grand as your dwelling. They were not "known for violence" though they did sometimes argue like an old married couple. I found them both likeable. Morgan struck his friend during a party and got 4 years for manslaughter which was reduced on appeal and he was released immediately some months ago.

You could have done a better job with your Companies House search because neither my mother nor I own any shares in the company, which has no bank accounts in Jersey. The company is paid on behalf of those residents who are on Housing Benefit not by DSS but by the Local Borough Council. They are also the people who monitor, most effectively, health and hygiene. The County Council has no role in this.

The hotel management has no direct relationship with any alcoholism or mental health agency and so has no given knowledge of individual residents' circumstances. The proportion who might suffer such complaints is small and probably about reflects the population average. I have not before heard of any drug dealers in or around the hotel. If your informant would care to identify any I'll see if Kenneth Clarke's police would like to lift them.

The hotel's bar predates our accommodating benefit claimants by 20 years.

Thanks for the idea about wooden partitions. I'll be able to use them in a railway arch when our 23 staff lose their jobs and 190 more are made homeless if we stop operating. In the meantime there's no cardboard city in Nottingham and I'll be happy to house any homeless persons from London who might be reading this in a discarded copy of your rag.

We don't run the place for fun and we would look pretty silly if we didn't make a profit. It's often necessary to endure a certain amount of unpopularity in one's living, even to sometimes need to be unpleasant but then I guess you'd know all about that.

Yours sincerely,
REX HARVEY,

Musters Hotel, Nottingham.

Y oh Y TV

Sir,

Further to your comment on the engulfment of Tyne-Tees by its "big brother" Yorkshire Television (EYE 818). Not only have YT cleared out most of TT's directors, they have also cleared out most of the alternative programmes that TT used to offer those people who, like me, could receive both channels.

What remains seem to be those very few programmes and advertisements (enough just to satisfy the ITC?) unique to a Newcastle-based organisation. The rest appear merely to be "networked" from Leeds.

To paraphrase: "If this is competition and consumer choice then I'm a banana."

Yours faithfully,
DALE CROMBLEHOLME.

York.

God spotted

Sir,

I enjoyed your piece "God To Leave Church of England" (EYE 819). However, many a true word spoken in jest, even if belatedly! As one whose duties include weekly attendance at Sunday Matins in one of our top cathedrals, I had the distinct impression that He left in the late 50s or early 60s.

Yours sincerely,
HARRY FERRAR.

Summertown, Oxford.

I-SPY

St Judes, Plymouth

Submitted by E.A. Ferrett. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Trains now standing

Sir,

"Trains have to slow down... especially South of Rugby... for safety... Birmingham to Euston Pullman takes nine minutes longer..." (EYE *819*).

How long did it take your contributor to find the "example" of the only train currently slowed nine minutes mainly for pathing reasons (another train stopping in front of it)? I record journeys on this line frequently and in detail, and categorically no such "safety" slowings currently afflict us. Even the temporary slowings which come and go with maintenance work all the time have been noticeably fewer of late, with sometimes none at all. Speeds for Northampton trains were recently being raised.

Right story — "safety" slowings are indeed a dire danger next — but please don't keep spoiling it with counter-productive premature exaggeration.

Yours faithfully,
M.J. OAKLEY,

Sutton Coldfield, W. Midlands.

Vesta'd interest

Sir,

I might be able to satisfy Mr Martin Smith's bizarre curiosity (Letters, EYE *819).*

At the moment, Croatians are exporting a great many products, ranging from clothing to shipping, vitamin C and, er... matches.

They have to. After all, they have got their widows, kids and 700,000 Croatian and Muslim refugees to support.

However, Mr Smith must be patient.

Under "Vance Peace Plan for Croatia" — as applied by "SERBOFOR" (UNPROFOR to you), Croatian towns, notably Zadar and Sibenik are shelled daily.

So, it might cheer Mr Smith that indeed the prospects are that in due course Croatia will only be able to export "wood from trees splintered by shells" — albeit in stiff competition with some neighbouring countries.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN BLAGOVIC,

London WC1.

Mote & beam me up

Sir,

Has anybody noticed the similarity between the pathetic security guards employed by Captain James T. Kirk in "Star Trek" (guaranteed to lose prisoners, get shot/beaten up by aliens, etc.) and the antics of Group 4's employees in their attempt to replace the prison service? Could they be in any way related?

E.S. SLATER,

Sheffield.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"24 years old with shoulders so much older."
TED LOWE, BBC2
(Andrew Haikalis)

"My name is the one people normally have at the end of their lips."
IAN WRIGHT (Arsenal), ITV
(Dr R.J. Hodgson)

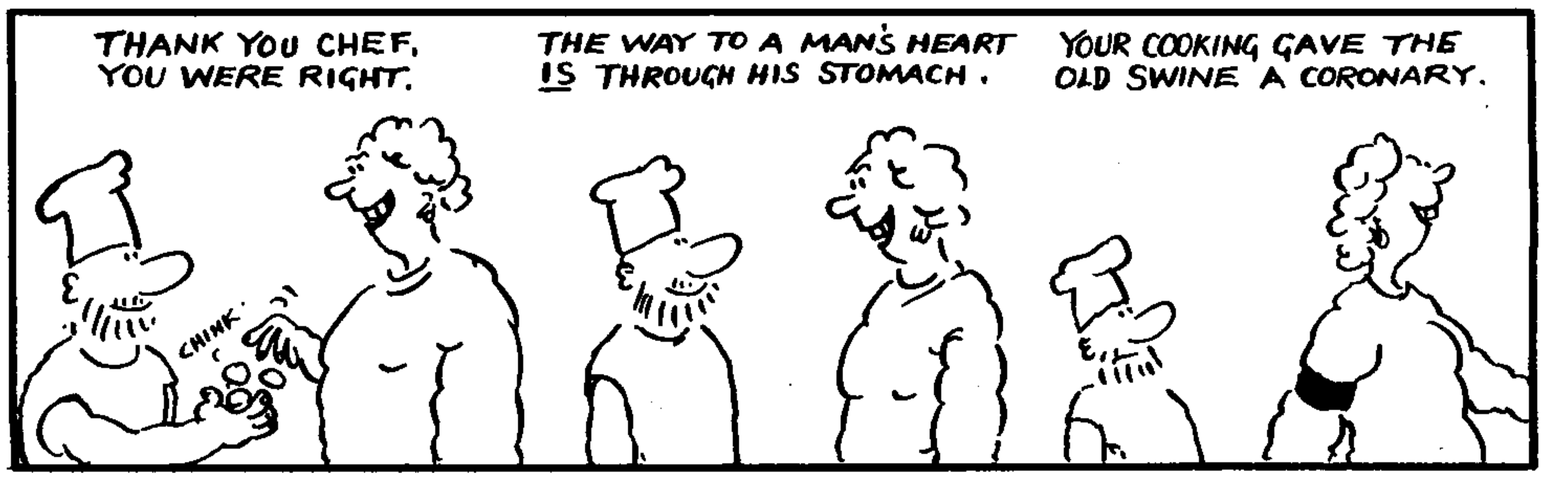
"A late consolation goal for Middlesbrough — they won't take any consolation from that."
RAY STUBBS, BBC1
(S.J. Phillips)

"...This is a view that has been expressed by some very thoughtful people — as well as those in the House of Commons."
JOHN COLE, BBC2
(F.A. Beswick)

Andy Smith: *"So at the end of the day, why do you think Arsenal won?"*
George Graham: *"Because we scored 2 goals and Sheffield Wednesday scored 1."*
BBC RADIO 4
(George Hammersley)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN


THANK YOU CHEF. YOU WERE RIGHT.
CHINK
THE WAY TO A MAN'S HEART IS THROUGH HIS STOMACH.
YOUR COOKING GAVE THE OLD SWINE A CORONARY.

Letter from **Moscow**

from Our Own Correspondent

HAVING won his referendum by a margin that surprised even him, Tsar Boris is digging in for a long stay in a manner that his predecessors would have wholeheartedly endorsed.

While go-slow "wets" among his aides are purged, Yeltsin has slipped into new living accommodation on Ulitsa Osennay: a 25-flat block complete with sauna, gold taps, marble floors and pilfered pre-revolutionary chandeliers.

Vladimir Perevalov, the official civil engineer who personally supervised construction of our president's 450-square metre apartment, has confirmed what we the Russian public — restricted to an entitlement of nine square metres of living space each — always suspected: that this place is far more opulent than anything he ever worked on for Khruschev, Brezhnev or Gorbachev.

With Ruslan Khasbulatov living in Brezhnev's old pile down the road — and feigning surprise when he found that the phones were bugged — Russians have been reassured that it's all change for no change.

Yet it is not so much change as the harsh reality that was so effectively hidden for 70 years that is now making itself felt here. "Upper Volta with rockets" — the western cold warriors' description of Russia — is, post START II, becoming "Upper Volta without rockets". Indeed, given the endless round of debt renegotiations, cap-in-hand appeals to western aid donors, hyperinflation, meltdown devaluations and growing unemployment, the comparison with Upper Volta may even be flattering.

For most Russians the free market amounts to little more than a 100 times increase in the price of bread — 32 kopeks to 32 roubles in less than two years — and the freedom to buy such trinkets as 300 rouble Mars bars from vendors selling little else in the subways. Add to that the freedom to gaze up at advertising hoardings displaying Italian cars or French perfumes that are still unavailable here, and it is easy to see why most still consider themselves victims rather than beneficiaries of reform.

No wonder, given the laughable way in which ardent Communist party *apparatchiks* are struggling to become equally ardent capitalists. Boris's own understanding of economics would flatter Norman Lamont. When, in an effort to demonstrate the trend, he ran through the inflation statistics for the first quarter at a recent industrialists' convention — 27 percent in January; 25 percent in February; 17.4 percent in March — he was laughed out of court.

His response — "I don't understand..." — might be the epitaph for his economic strategy. One aide has claimed that during the referendum campaign it had to be explained to him in some detail that if he went on doubling pensions, boosting wages and promising more agricultural credits the budget deficit, the prime cause of hyperinflation, could only increase. "So what?" Boris is alleged to have retorted. "The people will have voted for lower inflation."

If that isn't enough to drive us all to drink along with Boris, the consequences of such pork-barrelling logic most certainly are. Rationing by output (lack of it) has been swapped for rationing by price (too much of it). And a close look at the US$24 billion in G7 aid awarded last year has provoked even the humblest Russian to ask: who is helping whom?

Does Russia really need 300 gross of tomato ketchup and cranberry sauce, while western aid donors tuck into Siberia's oil, gas and minerals, and steal the country's brightest and best for hard currency jobs abroad?

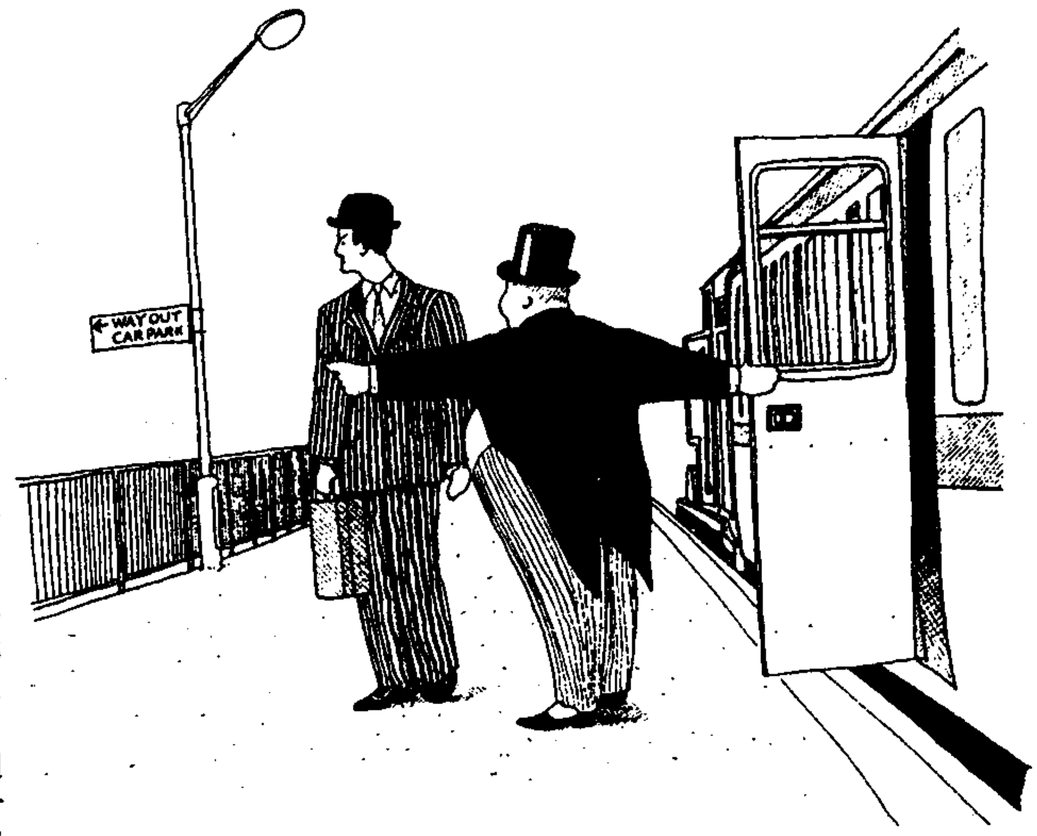
About half last year's G7 aid package was spent on western goods — the sort of tied aid the third world knows so much about; another US$2bn went to the foreign "consultants" who now litter the country. The US$9bn that might have helped — slated for economic stabilisation — has never arrived.

"Boris — Where Are Your 30 Pieces Of Silver?" demanded the banners on May day. Perhaps Yeltsin's own belt-tightening means trading in gold bath taps for silver at his home on Ulitsa Osennay.

THOMAS

THE PRIVATISED TANK ENGINE

Thomas's day off



"IF I went on strike, this town would be brought to its knees," said Thomas as the passengers packed into Annie and Clarabel one morning peak.

"Shut yer face," said Bertie the Deregulated Bus as he moved off with just one passenger on board.

"I'm indispensable, you see," Thomas called after him smugly.

"Bad news," said Thomas's driver next morning. "Someone's committed suicide on the down fast line."

"Anyone we know?" asked Thomas. "The Fat Controller has been looking depressed lately. He keeps muttering things like 'open access' and 'vertical integration'."

But just then the Fat Controller waddled along the platform. "Yes, the line will be closed today, while investigations are carried out."

"But that's not fair," said Thomas. "If someone was knocked down on a road, the police would keep the traffic moving past and clear the road in a jiffy."

"But Thomas, you know a death on a *railway* is a serious matter."

"Very well. I suppose I'll have to take the alternative route round the coast."

"No you won't, Thomas. We haven't paid to use that track."

"But it's only used by three freight trains a week. Surely we can use it for a nominal fee," protested Thomas.

"No, we're putting Bertie on instead. We won't have to pay a bean towards the roads he uses."

"Bertie? Oh my God!" Thomas was mortified.

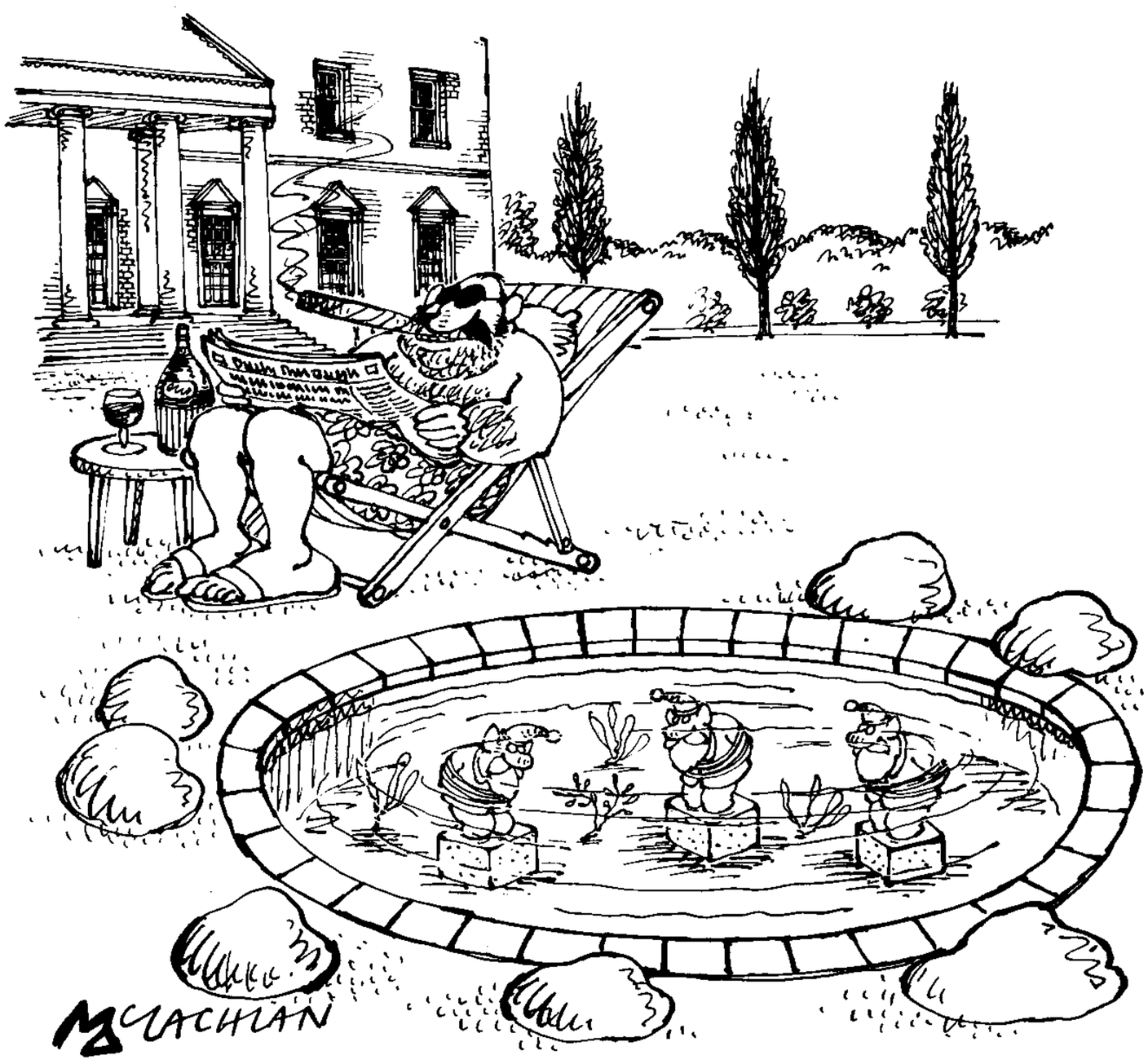
The Fat Controller turned to a passenger who was about to step aboard Clarabel. "Replacement bus today, sir. Just out on the forecourt there."

"What? That filthy old boneshaker? Can't you see I'm wearing a suit? Besides, I've got to be in town by nine," said the passenger, hurrying back towards the car park.

Then Bertie gave a rude honk as he moved away from the station, with four passengers on board. "Indispensable again today, are we?"

"But... Bertie! Wait!" cried Thomas in desperation. "What have you done with the other 246 regular passengers of mine?"

But there was no reply. Bertie was roaring away. And soon, Thomas was left in a silence broken only by the squeak of the car park's exit barrier nodding up and down furiously.



POETRY CORNER

Lines on the 50th Anniversary of the Dambusters

So. Dambusters.
You are
Fifty.

Dum dum di
Dum dum di
Dum dum

Dum dum di
Dum dum di
Dum.

Yes, that was
Your theme
Tune.

Or was that
633 Squadron?

Or the
Magnificent
Seven?

E.J. Thribb (17½)

Note to readers

True Stories is no more, but do please keep sending weird and wonderful tales from around the world. A replacement column will be appearing soon.

£10 for contributions.

Great Bores Of Today.

"... it's pathetic I don't know why they keep showing it year after year the songs are all the same and they're all terrible you can't remember any of them the Turkish one was unbelievable half of them were bald and the song was just like you'd hear on holiday and the Norwegian girl couldn't even sing I felt really sorry for her and yet she got fantastic votes Croatia gave it twelve I think it was just like the Swiss girl what was she wearing? say what you like about Terry Wogan but he's a professional he was very funny and informative and he seemed to know everything the Irish song was actually quite good my wife gave it the maximum I gave it to the UK entry... you know the Royaume Uni... ha ha ha what was it called? you had to pity the Bosnians they'd come all that way it must have been very disappointing for them and Israel it's not Europe is it? how do they get in? they should let in some of the Arabs the voting must be rigged I mean France never gives Germany any points and vice versa and there's no way Sweden got 104 points I don't know why anyone watches it..."

Celeb

LIGGER

I HEAR COCAINE ABUSE IN THE 70's HAS LEFT YOU WITH A BRAIN LIKE A SIEVE DAVID.
AFRAID SO GARY.
WELL MINE'S LIKE A BLOOMIN COLLANDER THESE DAYS. LIKE YOU I HAVE THE MOST ENORMOUS MEMORY LAPSES.
IT'S TERRIBLE ISN'T IT?
AWFUL, DAVID, AWFUL. I COMPLETELY FORGET THE MOST BASIC THINGS SOMETIMES.
YEAH?
LIKE THE FACT THAT I'VE PACKED THE STUFF IN. :SNIFF:
NUDGE NUDGE

GOVERNMENT STICKS TO POLICY SHOCK

by Our Political Staff **Simon Hefferlump**

IN AN extraordinary about-turn last night the Government committed itself to sticking firmly to one of its policies.

There was outrage in the Commons when Prime Minister Major announced his unwavering dedication to the central plank of the Government's political strategy — the U-turn.

"I have said that we will do U-turns and U-turns is what we will do. We'll do them before breakfast, before lunch and before dinner. There is no room for argument."

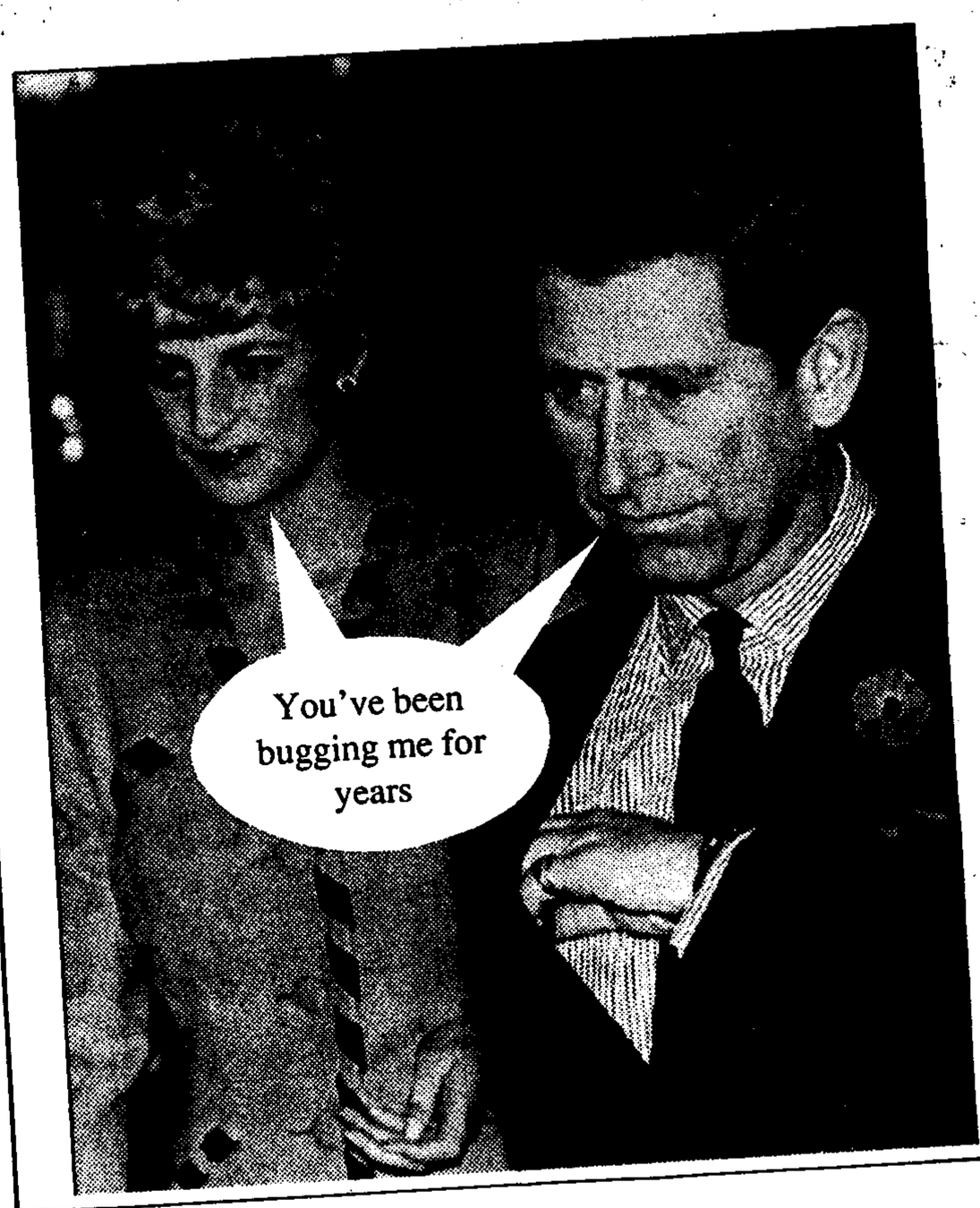
He continued to address his open-mouthed backbenchers with a firm, resolute and statesmanlike delivery.

"The people of this country expect consistency from us and that's what they will get. We will announce policies and then immediately abandon them. Every time. And that is a promise."

The Laddy's Not For Turning

As the initial response to his policy statement proved unfavourable (one Member shouting "Shame!" and another whispering "I'm not sure what the *Telegraph* will think of this") Mr Major hurriedly added:

"My Government will do U-turns on everything. Including the U-Turn Policy I've just announced, which I am now abandoning. Unless anyone objects. Goodnight."



Those Forthcoming Royal Books In Full

Whitaker's AllMade-Up 1993

(Snipcock & Tweed £15.99)

AT LAST the truth about the tragic quarrel between the *Mirror* and the *Sun* over the custody of the Royal lies *(shurely 'tapes'? Ed)*. Says the author: "I know the Royals better than anyone. They know me and trust me. Every night the Queen rings me up and tells me all her news. OK. It's a lie but put it in."

My Greatest Royal Scoops

by Nigel Pratt-Dumpster and someone who can write

(Dumpster Dumpbin Co, £49.99)

THE DOYEN of Royal Watchers appears on television and says: "Don't believe anyone else. Only I know everything. I'm the man who brought you the scoop that Charles and Di were happily married, as were Andy and Fergie."

Men in white coats then come and take him away.

The Fall of the House of Wislon

by A.N. Windsor

(The Sinclair-Burchill Garbage Co, £378.99)

THE YOUNG Prince Andrew of Wislon seemed to have it all. Brains, success and infinite charm. Where did it all go wrong? How did he end up writing rubbish in the *Evening Standard* every night? The author talks to intimate friends of the family, as well as putting a lot of cuttings in to pad it all out. Says Windsor: "To write one Royal piece might be considered a misfortune. To write hundreds of them begins to look pathetic."

Babar Goes to the Bank

by Jean de Bruhnose

(IndieTrash plc, £784.99)

THE LOVEABLE she-elephant, Lyn Babar, is off again on her adventures. This time she writes a big book about the King and Queen of England and comes home with a huge bag of gold.

The Duke of Sex

by Kitty Katty

(Bandwagon Press, £399.99)

A NO-HOLDS-BARRED portrait of the Duke of Edinburgh by America's top psychopath.

Was Prince Philip really the Yorkshire Ripper and was Sutcliffe wrongly convicted?

This is only one of hundreds of stupid questions put by the woman who exposed Nancy Reagan as having an affair with Frank Bruno.

(That's enough Books. Ed.)

PETER McLIE'S WEAK

New Man At Observer

I hear of a new name being mentioned as the possible future editor of the *Observer*. I can reveal it is none other than Donald Trelford. He's fresh and different and has lots of new ideas. Come on Conrad Black, give Donald a break!

Taking The Piste

Isn't it strange the way no one goes skiing in the summer? I have many friends who talk about nothing else all winter, but come the fine weather they show no interest at all. Funny old world, isn't it? Isn't life fine and grandy?

(Brilliant! A. Neil.)

NAIL-BITING CLIMAX TO EURO CONTEST

by our man in Denmark
Bruce Christian Anderson

INTENSE excitement mounted yesterday as the Danes played host to the EuroDrivel Contest. The biggest gathering of bores from all over Europe crammed into tiny Denmark to compete in the great Maastricht Referendum. Would the winner be Nej or Jøg? *(See next week's Eye for full details).*

Bookies' favourites include:

- *Yesterday's Man* by The Ted Heath Orchestra (7-2).
- *No, No, A Thousand Times No* by Big Normo Tebbs with his backing group The Fabulous Maggies (10-1).
- *Rule Britannia* by Billy Cash and The Sceptics (100-1).
- *Puppet Government on a Shoestring* by Sandy Peter Shore (4-6 favourite).

(That's enough songs. Ed.)

The Secret Diary of John Major aged 47¾

Friday

I was in no small measure annoyed this morning to read in the Daily Telegraph that we had lost the Newbury by-election by a not inconsiderable number of votes — i.e. 22,000. I am afraid everyone will blame Norma Lamont for this, which is most unfair, though understandable since he is entirely to blame. I asked Mr O'Donnell what I should say about this defeat, if anyone asked me. He said, "Tell them that Mr Lamont is a first-rate Chancellor, and there is no question of him losing his job. That should keep them quiet for a few days."

Just then Norma himself came in through the window and said, "I don't want you to blame yourself, John. It wasn't entirely your fault. C'est la vie." And then he put a beret on his head and started to sing a song in French about someone called "Margaret Rien" which I took to be a reference to the fact that Mrs Thatcher means nothing nowadays. He is a very loyal friend, like Mr Mellor and Mr Patten, and it would be a very sad day if he chose to resign for losing the by-election, which he did not. Oh no. In my view, the only people to blame are the voters.

Saturday

We had a routine emergency Cabinet meeting to discuss the best way to go forward after the unfortunate events at Newbury and everywhere else. Everyone is agreed that the best policy is to be completely honest and pretend that we are not panicking. I am going to say, "We are listening very carefully to what people are saying," which my new speechwriter Mr Morris Norris says makes me sound like the sort of trustworthy bank manager who appears in the television adverts. Mr Norris is the one who wrote my brilliant speech about the warm beer and the cricket match, which would have won us the by-election if it had not been for certain people singing in French!! The bank manager idea is particularly appropriate since I used to work in a bank, although I never actually rose to become manager, although my wife Norman has often said that I would have done given another twenty years!

Mrs Bottomley rather irritatingly asked what this new "listening" idea meant. "Does it mean," she asked, "that we have to change our policies if people don't like them?"

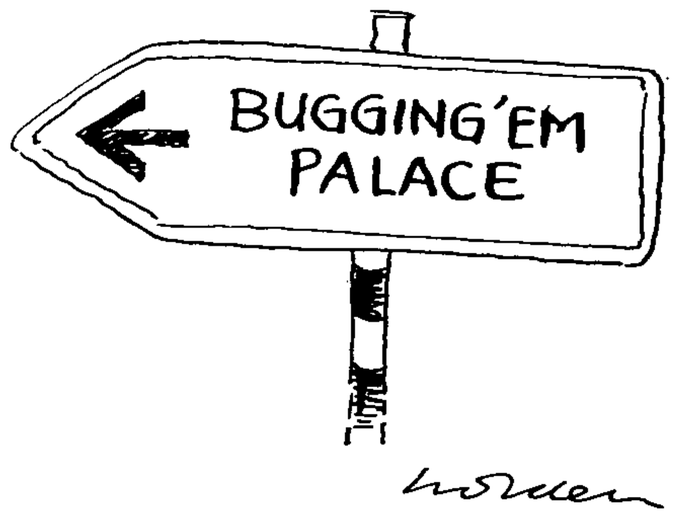
"Oh no," I said, "because that would be a sign of weakness."

Monday

Mr Patten has agreed with me that, as a first example of our new policy, he should drop all his silly ideas about testing in schools. "But surely, prime minister," he said, "this will be taken as a sign of weakness?"

"On the contrary," I said, "it is a sign of strength that I am prepared to abandon your policies because people don't like them."

Meanwhile I am very gratified to see that everybody in the Cabinet is stressing publicly that it was not Norma Lamont's fault that we lost last week's elections. I was watching Mr Portfolio say this on the Big Breakfast Show this morning, when there was a loud crash in the street outside. It was Norma Fowler arriving in one of his



Group 4 vans and being released through the window by one of his highly-trained guards.

Tuesday

I cannot think why the journalists are still going on about the Newbury by-election, which was at least four days ago, and which everyone has completely forgotten about. In this morning's Times someone called Lord Rees Mogg even wrote an article saying that it was my fault that we lost. How ridiculous! It was not me that went round singing in French and putting VAT on heating bills! Not that Norma should be blamed for either of these mistakes. In my judgement this is all a delayed reaction to Mrs Thatcher, who no one liked. No wonder she had to be got rid of.

I have decided to keep a notebook with a list of all the journalists who write rude things about me! In the lunch hour I went to Ryman's and bought six. I told Norman, "These are my little black books." "Then why have you chosen grey, then?" she asked in a terribly supportive voice.

Wednesday

Today I met someone that everyone hates and millions of people want to kill. Oh no, it was not Mr Lamont! That would be quite unfair, particularly as he is not in any way to

blame for the by-election that we have all forgotten about.

It was a famous author called Mr Rushdie who has upset our friends in Iraq - or was it Iran? I can never remember, but it was one of the countries Mr Clark and I used to sell guns to. Anyway, he told me he was "living in Hiding". To make conversation I said, "Oh yes, is that West Hiding or East Hiding?" There was a long silence, so I suggested that, to save money, instead of having policemen to guard him, he should try a private security firm, like one run by my friend Sir Norma Fowler. "It is called Group 4," I said, but for some reason my guest had run out of the room screaming.

Thursday

It is confusing that everybody at the moment is called Clark. Alan Clark has written a diary in which he is very rude about everyone — which is not in my judgement the point of a political diary at all. A diary should record a measured and prudent response to public events, not personal remarks about colleagues. What an upperclass twit Clark is. In fact he is nearly as stupid as Lord Rees Mogg, whose name I have put in my new book(s) of people to hate with moderate vehemence.

The other Mr Clarke is spelt with an E, and everyone is saying he is just the man to succeed Norma Lamont. When I mentioned this to Kenneth in a jokey manner he gave me a funny look and said "It's not *his* job I'm after." What a modest man he is (unlike his name-sake, who is a rude bore).

Friday

Norma Fowler came in to see me again to talk about the by-election. "No," I said, "Newbury is behind us. We must go forward, as I said in my speech. We must listen and learn."

"Then listen to me," said Sir Norma in a rude manner. "There's another by-election now in Christchurch."

"But surely," I pointed out to Sir Norma, who as Chairman of the Party is supposed to know these things, "Christchurch is a safe seat."

"No it isn't," said Sir Norma. "Our majority is only 25,000."

MILLIONS LOST IN NEW NHS SCANDAL

by Our Health Staff
Jill Bupa and **Polly Technic (now the University of Toynbee)**

A NEW report reveals that the National Health Service last year lost a staggering 20 million names from its waiting lists, thus enabling the Tories to win the election.

This is how the extraordinary NHS scam worked:

1. 1991. Health Secretary William Waldegrave announces that waiting lists are far too long.

2. 1992 (just before election). Waldegrave announces that waiting lists have been miraculously slashed to zero.

3. April 1992. Tories win election.

4. March 1993. Auditors discover that millions of names have gone missing from waiting lists.

5. April 1993. Health chiefs explain that missing names had been on the waiting list to get on the waiting list.

6. Chief suspect in scandal known as "Waiting-gate" described as "bossy-looking woman with blonde hair and husband on bicycle".

7. No one charged.

Mrs Bottomley is 41.

MORE PRINCE AND PRINCESS ARGUMENT REVELATIONS

by Our Fairytale Staff **The Wicked Whitaker of the West End**

A SENSATIONAL transcript was last night leaked to the press by the security services which revealed the final breakdown in the fairytale relationship between Snow Whiter than White and Prince Charmless.

The document in our possession was gained entirely legally and with the full cooperation of the person who made it up.

THAT ROW IN FULL

Snow White: You used to be so charming. Like Richard Gere in that film. But you're not any more. Besides I know you're still seeing Sleeping Beauty.

Prince Charming: Look I don't want to talk about this. You'll wake the dwarves.

Snow White: Oh grow up! Can't you behave like an adult for a change?

Prince Charming: You're so self-centred. Don't you ever think about me? I do.

Snow White: Oh God. You're just going to have to face up to this. I've been acting all Snow White for the last ten years... Charms, come back!

(Door slams)

The joint editors of the *Nursery Times*, Mr Grimm and his brother Mr Grimm, maintained that the transcripts were genuine and authentic.

"We have printed them as a matter of national importance. It is very important that this national sells more papers than the *Daily Mirror Mirror on the Wall*.

Wedding of the Year

How they are related

Countess Raine Spencer

Count Jean-Francois de Chambrun

Dame Barbara Windsor—Prince Rainier

Mrs Gerald Legge-Over—Lord Lewisham Town-Hall

Madame Cynthia Rayne—Le Comte de Gevrey-Chambertin (1947)

Lord Dartmouth—Lady Loudmouth

La Comte de Monte-Python—Jean de Florettes

Sir Spencer Tracy—Manon des Sources

Frank Spencer—Betty

Marks and Spencer—Jules (et Jim)

Viscount Jeremy Althorpe—Claude Raines

Countess Acid Raine—Count Jean-Franglais de Champoo

"Hi, Honey, I'm homicidal!"

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

CHARLES AND DI HAD ROW

Astonishing Tape Reveals That Royal Couple Did Not Get On

by The Man Who Really Knows The Royalties
JAMES REDFACEDTWITAKER

In the most sensational news story ever, I can today exclusively reveal that the *Sun* has stolen my stolen transcript!
Bastards! I will get them.

That Royal Tape In Full

Man from *Mirror*: Here. These are my transcripts, wot was given to me personally by my mate in MI5.

Man from *Sun*: Bollocks. You made 'em up. Finders keepers, anyway.

***Mirror*:** Give 'em back or I'll kick yer 'ead in.

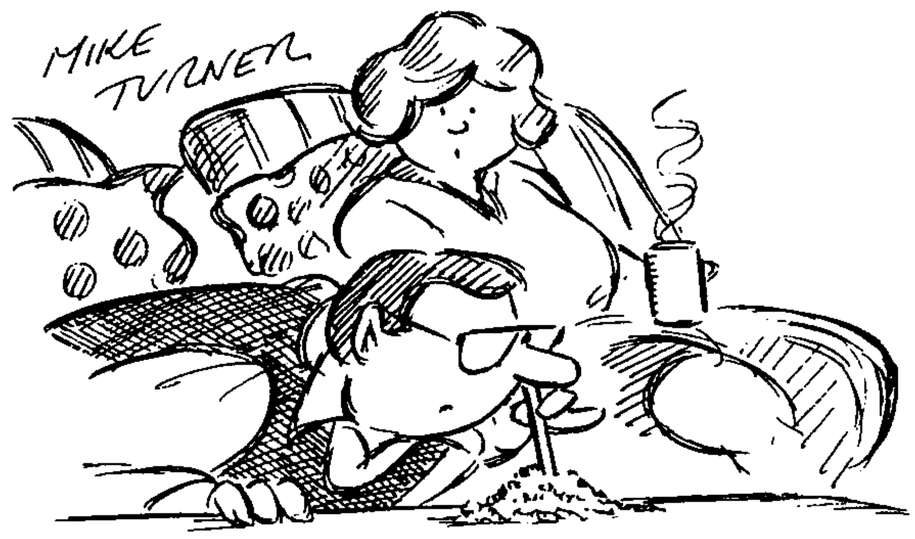
***Sun*:** You and whose army?

***Mirror*:** There is no point in talking to you when you're in this mood.

***Sun*:** Can't we talk about this like adults?

Man from MI5: Turn up the volume Carruthers, this bit's rather good.

(Contd. p. 94)



"Why can't you just drink your Horlicks like everybody else!"

Notes & Queries

A service by our readers for our readers (as seen in all other newspapers).

QUESTION: Who invented the safety pin?

☐ THEY were first used in the Peninsular War by an army surgeon, Lt. Col. Sir Frederic Treeves Pynne, my great-great-great-great-grandfather, who was attached to the 17th/14th Dragoons. The "Horse Nappy Fastening Device", as it was originally called, was often used by the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, but soon became familiarly known among the common soldiery as the "Sir F.T. Pynne". A portrait of my ancestor by Thomas Laurence R.A. is to be seen in the Royal Veterinary College Museum, Godalming (open to the public Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2.30-5.30pm). — *Algernon Pynne-Table, Chairman of Pynne Medical Accessories Ltd, Esher.*

QUESTION: Why are carrots pointed at one end?

☐ THE original carrot, as we know from fossil evidence discovered in Arizona, was perfectly round, like a potato. But in the late Pliocene period, as the earth's crust dried off, the node of the root evolved into its present shape in order to reach sources of moisture below the surface. However the Ethiopians still cultivate a round carrot, *Carotus aethiopicus circularis*, which is regarded as a great delicacy. — *Prof. N. Stone, Oxford.*

QUESTION: I often hear talk these days of Pretzel's Law. What does it refer to?

☐ P.F.M. McCorquodale was wrong last week in claiming that the law first observed by the Swiss astronomer Pro. Vogel Pretzel relates to the shortest distance between two stars at any given point. Pretzel's Law in fact states that where $P=Z^q$ then the median point can be defined as a function of the square root of P-Q (see *Pretzel's Law Explained* by Prof. D.J. Enright, New Dworking University Press, 1926). — *Dr Tibor Csato, Munich.*

QUESTION: I have been told that Mozart was really black? Is this true?

☐ RECENT research has suggested that Mozart's great-grandmother may have had an illegitimate child by a member of a troupe of acrobats from the Barbary Coast which visited Salzburg in 1664. This would explain the markedly dark colouring which we see in the celebrated Pfitzner silhouette of the composer (1791). — *P. Shaffer, London.*

QUESTION: Why do we call the space at the rear of a car the "boot"?

☐ BECAUSE in the old hansom cabs there was always a small cupboard at the back in which the coachman kept his spare boots. It is nothing to do with the well-known chain of chemist shops, as asserted last week by Ms Megan Tresidder. — *Charles Moore, Canary Wharf.*

NEXT WEEK: Answers please for the following: Why is Blu-Tac blue? Is it possible for ghosts to make love? Why do country people take off their hats when they see a heron? How does Peter McKay get away with it?

CUMBRIAN MAN HITS JACKPOT

by Our Pools Staff
Richard Littlewoods

A 54-year-old part-time novelist today received a £2 million pay-out as part of a syndicate.

" 'appen me and sum o' me mates at t'London Weekend t'Television got lucky," said the man, who wished to remain anonymous.

South Laughing All The Way To The Bank Show

Speaking from his modest Hampstead cottage in Cumbria, Mr X explained how, for an outlay of just a couple of thousand pounds, he and a group of workmates had reaped a multi-million-pound payday.

Mr X

Asked whether the money would change his life, he told reporters: "No, of course not. I am incredibly rich already."

FRENCH CLIMBER JOINS QUEUE

by Our Mountaineering Staff
Sherpa Howard

A 58-year-old Frenchman, Le Comte de Babycham, has become the latest in a long line of social climbers to ascend the world's most frozen peak, Mount Raine.

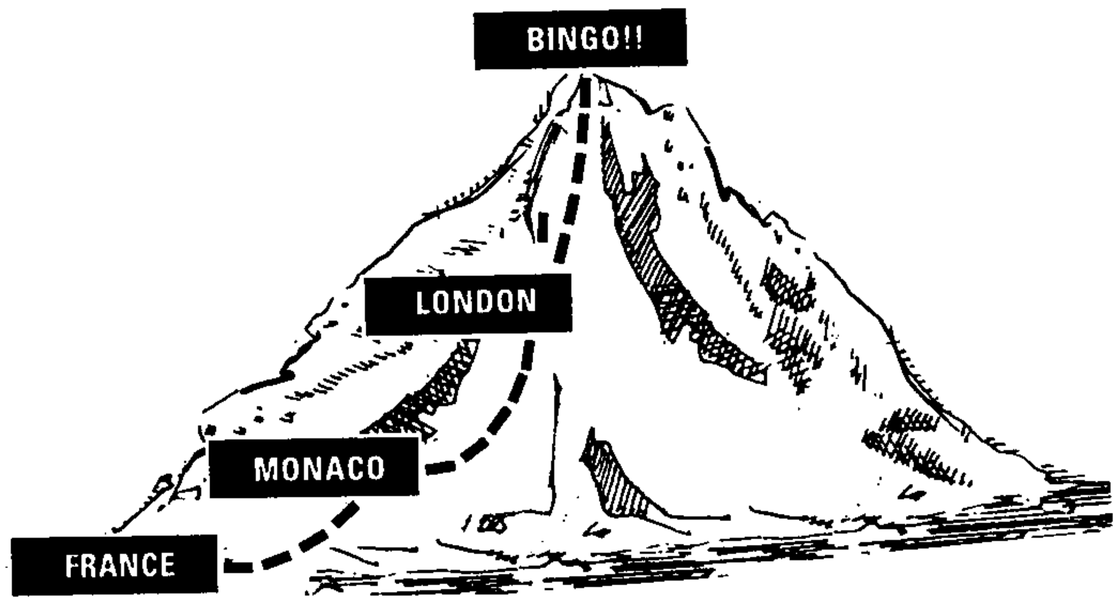
The Count, who set out only three weeks ago, follows in the footsteps of some of the great mountaineers who have conquered the craggy face of what the locals call "the Ice Queen".

Him A Layer

Those who have seen for themselves the breathtaking view from the top of her dinner table include:

- Sherpa Legge
- Sir John Lewisham
- Sir Edmund Dartmouth
- Tensing Spencer

When asked why he had bothered to propose such a risky expedition, the plucky Frenchman replied: "Because the money's all there."

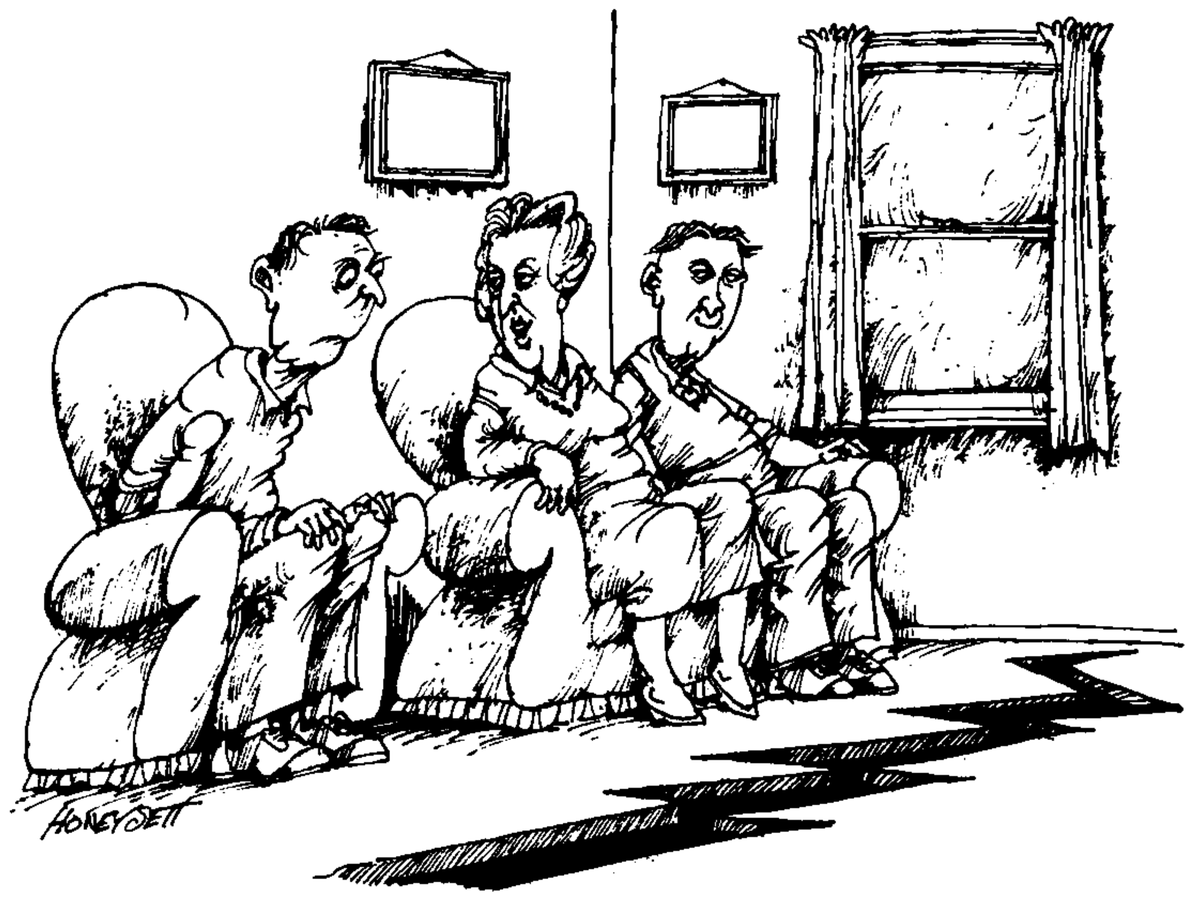


PROPOSED ROUTE UP THE WORLD'S LARGEST MOUNTAIN OF MONEY

2.15 —KILTON (S) STAKES 7f Winner £2,070 (18 run)

9 550-302 **FLETCHER'S BOUNTY** (7) 12 Mrs M Reveley 4 9 7 (SF) ..... K Darley 25
Stayed on without troubling 2½l winner White Creek at Newcastle 7f
10 5/0046- **PREMIER MAJOR** (231) 11 S Kettlewell 4 9 7 ..... Paul Eddery 23
Nothing special in mixed company last season and needs to improve

Daily Mirror



"We brought it back from our holiday — it's an earthquake"

THOSE 10 ASIL NADIR CONDITIONS IN FULL

I, Asil Nadir, agree to return to the United Kingdom on the following conditions:

1. **That I will be given a fair trial in a British court and found innocent.**
2. **That I shall be awarded full compensation for the loss of other people's money.**
3. **That the Serious Fraud Office will apologise to me personally on their knees for suggesting that I might in any way be dishonest or fraudulent.**
4. **That all British media should be closed down as a fitting and proper penalty for all the lies they have told about me.**
5. **That the Conservative Party, in return for the very large sums of money I have given them, should arrange for me to be given a life Dukedom in the style of the Duke of Del Monte, Earl Polly of Peck, Viscount Nadir of Asshole, Baron Maxwell.**

Conditions 6-10 have been placed in the Bank of North Cyprus and will not be revealed for 100 years.

LIZ
BY CUTTER PERKINS & RGJ
TELL ME, HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN DOING THIS?
AND DO YOU ENJOY IT? IT LOOKS INTERESTING.
I'VE BEEN TO LIZ'S
THRONE ROOM
ROYAL ARGUMENT
I ♥ CHAZZA
GUIDE TO BUCK HICE
RACING LATEST ODDS
GLUG! GLUG!
QUEEN MUM PHOTOS 50p
SAY SOMETHIN' I WANT TA HEAR!
YER A BLIDDY STUPID TART!
NOO PISS OFF!
SPEAK UP, LUV! WE'RE NOT GETTIN' YOU!
SUN
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
DIVVENT WORRY WOR CHAZZA! HE PAID 'IS EIGHTQUID!
Nº19
THIS IS SQUIDGY CALLIN' SUN HACK! COME IN FER YER COPY... OVER!
TOO RIGHT IT'S OVER!
YA GOB A SHITE!

FOWLER LASHES 'SNOBS AND TOFFS'

by Our Pathetic Excuses For Losing By-Elections Staff
Sir Norman Group Fourler

THE TORY loss of Newbury can be blamed on an outbreak of rampant snobbery by a handful of tens of thousands of voters who are living in the past, said Tory Party Chairman Sir Norman Foureyes last night.

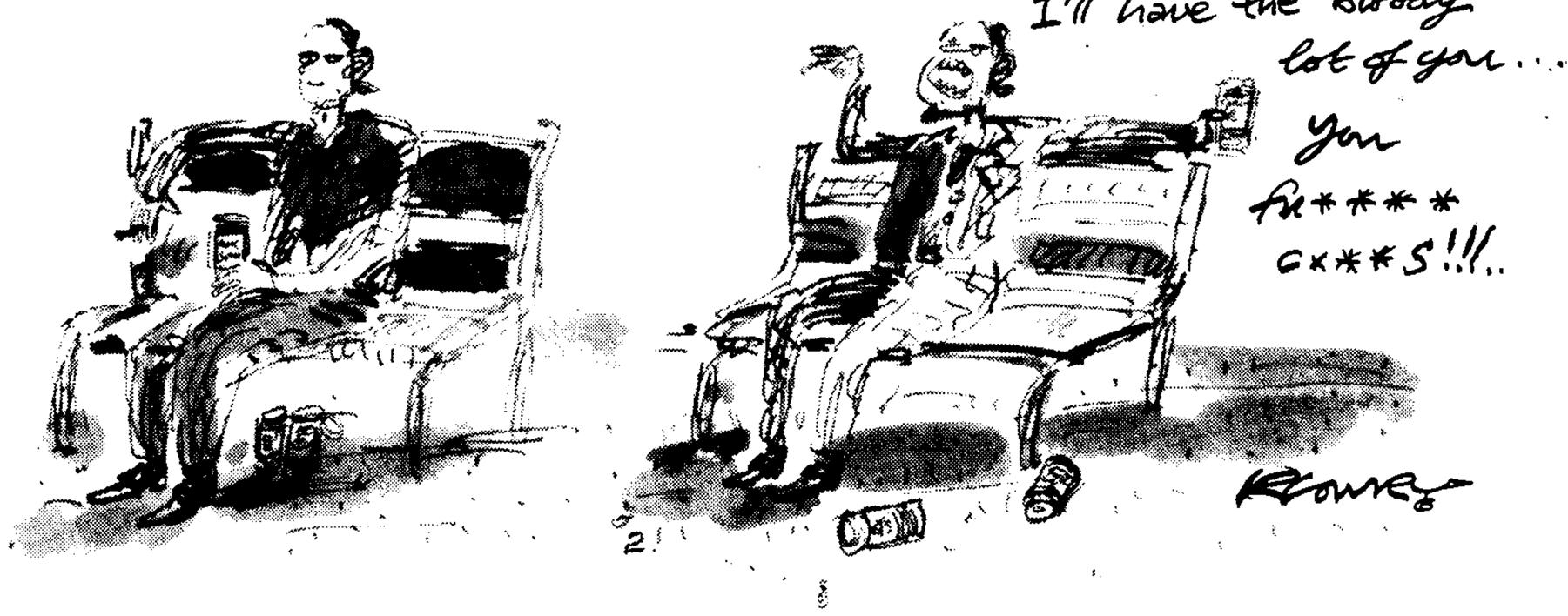
He particularly singled out for blame Lord Rees-Mogg, who had written a thundering article in the *Times* saying that Mr Major was "hopelessly incompetent and not up to the job".

Lord Mogg, said Sir Norman, is "a typical Tory grandee" who cannot accept the new classless Britain which Mr Major is so courageously trying to create.

Sir Norman accused Lord Mogg of wanting to drag the country back into the bad old days of the 1970s, "when trade unions rode roughshod over millions of helpless widows and orphans, huge piles of corpses lay unburied in the streets and dinosaurs roamed the land.

"This was what Britain was like before Mr Major became prime minister and swept away the snobs and the toffs, except Mr Hurd and Mr Waldegrave," Sir Norman went on. "I say it's time for these upper-class Lord Snooties like Norman Tebbit to jolly well shut up and let Mr Major get on with the job of ruining the country."

The strange case of Dr. Jekyll .... and Mr. Special Brew ....



NOW SHOWING

ALIVE!

A terrifying true-life story of a group of men and women who are the victims of an appalling crash in the middle of Newbury. Their government comes down unexpectedly and there are only a handful of survivors. See for yourself the shocking scenes as they eat each other in turn in a desperate attempt to keep their careers —

ALIVE!

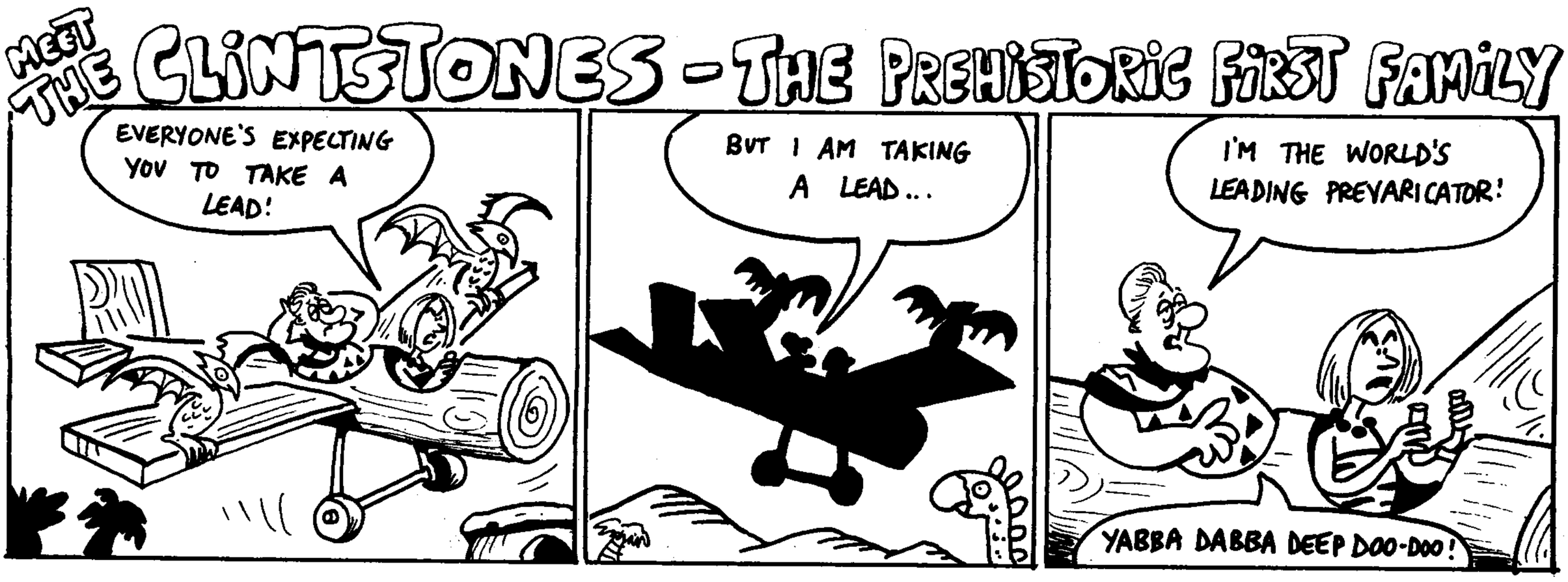
starring

John Major — Michael Heseltine
John Patten — Kenneth Clarke
Michael Portillo — Norman Fowler

and

Norman Lamont as the corpse

It will disgust you. It will appal you.
It will make you vote Lib Dem at the next election.


MEET THE CLINTSTONES - THE PREHISTORIC FIRST FAMILY
EVERYONE'S EXPECTING YOU TO TAKE A LEAD!
BUT I AM TAKING A LEAD...
I'M THE WORLD'S LEADING PREVARICATOR!
YABBA DABBA DEEP DOO-DOO!

THE DEPENDENT

It is. FRIDAY 21 MAY 1993 20,000 lire

LAMONT'S SHOCK APOLOGY

by Our Apology Staff
Hugh Sorry-Now

MR NORMAN Lamont last night startled Tory MPs *when he said: "I am very sorry — very sorry indeed — for the mistakes made by everyone else except myself.*

"I deeply regret — je regrette totalement, I might say" — and here Mr Lamont paused to laugh — "the fact that so many people have made so many errors.

"Apologies are certainly in order," the Chancellor went on, "from all those people who didn't vote Conservative in the recent elections.

"These ghastly, stupid, disloyal voters have no idea how hard I have worked to take all the tough, unpopular decisions that have been necessary to bring the economy to where it is today.

"If anyone should resign it should be everyone else."

TREASURY RESHUFFLE Late Flash

Mr J. Onanuga, formerly of Thresher plc, has been appointed to be the new Governor of the Bank of England.

Sound Bites

Quotes of the Week

■ I think the whole question of testing 14-year-olds has to be looked at again.
Colin Thompson, Assistant Headmaster, Crown Green Comprehensive, Bexley

■ I love London.
Joan Collins at 60

■ I don't mind wearing the new coloured kit for one-day cricket.
Simon Greig, Durham 2nd XI

■ Disaster for Tories.
Headline, Newbury News

■ We've noticed a small increase in the overall volume of lending this month.
Spokesman for the Halifax Building Society

(That's enough dull quotes. Ed.)

Italy and Spain best countries in Europe – official

A TELEPHONE survey conducted in the office of a leading British newspaper editor, Andreas Whittam-Strobini, has revealed a sensational change in the attitude of British newspaper editors towards their EEC partners, particularly Spain and Italy.

The survey found that 100 per cent of the one person canvassed now think that:

- **Spain is a great place.**
- **Italy is terrific.**
- **That chap Andreotti has been much maligned.**
- **Italian businessmen are a byword for incorruptibility.**
- **The term "Spanish practices" was coined to describe how hardworking and honest all Spaniards invariably are.**
- **Bull-fighting is very popular with bulls.**

Not On Other Pages

How the world's most independent newspaper was founded — extracts from the sensational new book that nobody is reading by Steven Glover.

Unfunny cartoon by Garlandi — see Daily Telegraph.

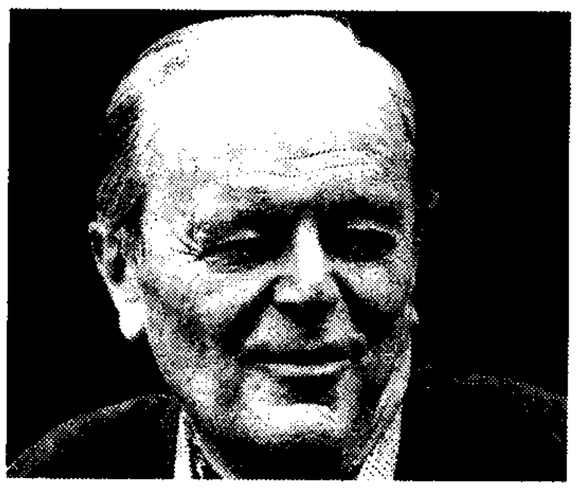
THOSE CLARKS IN FULL

Your Cut Out 'n' Keep Guide To The Family That's Making News

Kenneth Clarke, the popular, controversial, roly-poly, chain-smoking Home Secretary who is convinced that MI5 doesn't exist.

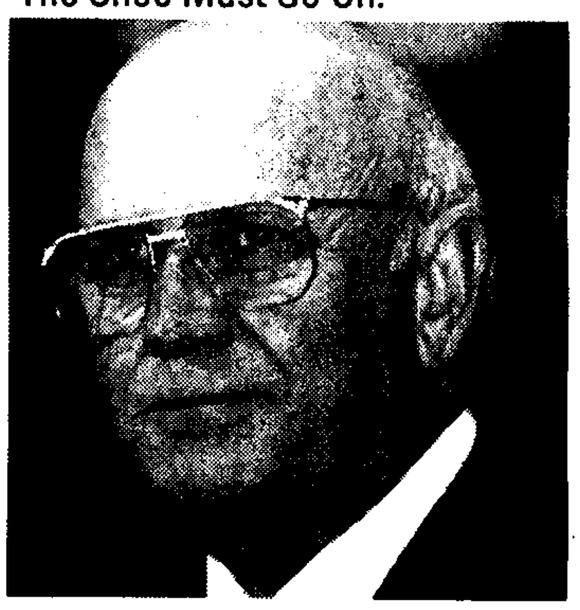
Alan Clark, the controversial, mad, sex-fiend whose diaries have shocked a nation with their intimate revelations about how he made love to 1,000 women in one night before selling arms to Saddam Hussein.

Lord Kenneth Clark *(deceased).* Popular, controversial TV personality who won the hearts of a nation with his catch-phrase: "What could be more agreeable?"



"Sir" Kenny Clarke *(deceased).* Popular, controversial jazz drummer who shocked a nation by inventing bebop — thus giving rise to the catch-phrase, "What could be more disagreeable?"

Clark's Shoes, controversial popular form of footwear, worn by many of the above. Long known for its advertising slogan "What could be more comfortable?" Currently subject of takeover bid by rivals The Shoe Must Go On.

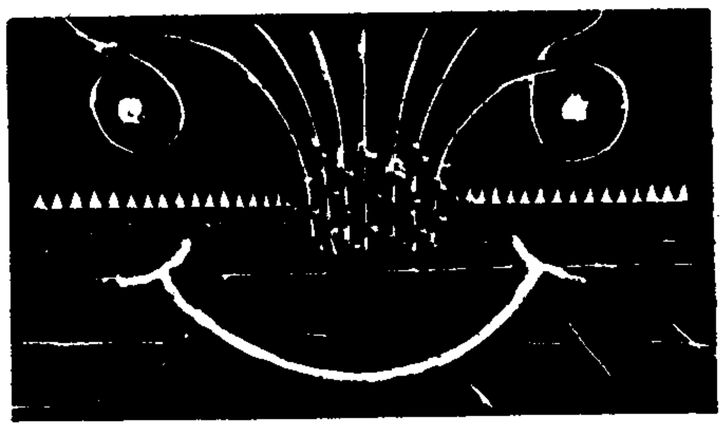


President F.W. de Clark, popular, controversial South African leader, whose government is currently subject of takeover bid by rivals ANC.

Frank Clark, soon-to-be controversial and unpopular new manager of Nottingham Forest football club, succeeding soccer's legendary "Mr Drink".

(That's enough Clarks. Ed.)

DIARY



BILL BUFORD

I thought there should be four judges — that seemed the right number for this sort of task — the task of choosing the Best of Young British Novelists — and I wanted to be one. Was I entitled to be one? Probably not. I love books — I love the feel of them, the look of them, I love editing them, and cutting large chunks out of them, and talking to Salman about them — but I hate reading them, Jesus Christ I hate reading them, my God I hate reading them, all those words and those gaps in between, not to mention the darn; punctuation.

Should that disqualify me? No way. *Granta* under my editorship — spanning half the 20th century now, all told — has been a thoroughly young and modern magazine — highly innovative too, beautifully neat and stylish, and with lots of *design*, nice shiny covers, and a really great size, easy for holding in the hand, just so long as you keep it closed — and with all that up-to-the-minute *writing* going on, I always thought — and our subscribers seemed to agree — that there simply wasn't any time for that old high-school bugbear of *reading*, dammit — in fact *Granta* was created — out of love and sweat and tears and so many, many late nights feeling alone and vulnerable and fragile and *isolated* — so that the ordinary guy could purchase a magazine the size of a book full of all the latest brilliant things and he could walk around with it under his arm for a few days — weeks, even — and then he could put it in its place on the shelf with all those other *Grantas* next to the Dire Straits CDs and that early Leonard Cohen — and he could feel, jeez, now I can get on with my life, knowing someone back there in the *Granta* office has already read it for me from cover to cover, and he could feel a sense of wonderment and deep-down awe, but above all a sense of profound *relief*.

The other judges were eminently qualified. I was thankful, after my first conversation with A.S. Byatt — the first of many long phone calls, an hour in length, sometimes an hour and a half, sometimes an hour and forty minutes — all of them beginning, "A.S. Byatt is out at the moment. Please leave your message after the tone" — to find someone who took fiction *seriously*. Like, Antonia would never read a book upside down, and she'd always notice if half the pages were missing.

At our first meeting — should I have been there? probably not — Antonia was concerned essentially for the women writers, who tended to come in to their own later than their male counterparts, through reason of marriage or social conditioning. She desperately wanted to raise the age of The Best of Young British Novelists to 75, so that we could include Iris Murdoch, whom she greatly admires. "But wouldn't that be unfair to Freya Stark?" I argued. "I'd guess she has a pretty hot novel inside her, and who's to say a hundred isn't young these days?" We all then agreed that 102 was a suitable cut-off point for Young Women Novelists, but this liberating idea was cruelly vetoed by the moneymen.

I thought of this when — just last week — I heard that Freya Stark had died, made suddenly old and vulnerable and fragile by not being included in the Best Young Novelists issue. Life can be a bitch, as Ray Carver once said to me, or was it Martin Amis?

Some thought I'd be too *literary* to be a judge. Okay — so I can turn out a pretty damn good sentence (a sentence that is pretty damn good is what I'm capable of turning out — and fast-moving and *bold* — with lots of dashes too —) which means that I am what you'd call highly *literary*, heck god a'mighty, what with being able to make for myself a precise, compact, not at all long-winded — not even remotely long-winded, in fact positively short-winded — (is there such a word? probably not) — sentence in which every damn word is a word that counts, and I mean *counts*, meaning every single damn word — but *too literary*? Jeez.

It was January 1980. The beginning of a new decade. The Eighties. And the end of an old decade. The Seventies. And two decades on from another, even older decade. The Sixties. And — though none of us realised it then — just ten years away from a whole new decade. The Nineties.

Time.

January 1980. I read a short story. I thought this is the kind of thing we should be publishing. It was short And it was a story. Right on, I thought. Stories, and short. Short stories. We should be publishing more of these.

Three years later, I was to publish short stories by the Best of Young British Writers. They were a group of then unknown young writers — Ursula Bentley, Pat Barker, Buchi Emecheta, Christopher Priest — who have since become nationally and internationally unknown old writers on a vast and daunting scale.

Ten years on, we set out to choose their successors in the next generation. A task. And daunting. A daunting task.

We read and we read and we read. And we read some more. God, how we read: words, sentences, even whole pages. Then we met. And we quarrelled a bit. Antonia wanted the last cream cake. So did Salman. Why not halve it, I said which — after a bit of squealing — they did. But that left the problem of the smoked salmon sandwiches. Four judges, but only seven sandwiches. Second time round, someone was going to miss out. In the end, we compromised — one each in the first round, and then in the second round Antonia ate all three. The next day, a fax from Salman:

Smoked salmon: *Very* good.

Chicken paste: No.

Sandwich spread: Very surprising and enjoyable.

Gentleman's Relish: Enjoying.

Peanut butter: Second thoughts — out?

And in conclusion?

No conclusion. And many. All and nothing. Within and without. This and that. Chalk and cheese. Life and Death. Fortnum and Mason.

We chose twenty young novelists. We could have chosen thirty. We could have chosen ten. But we chose twenty. Twenty. Exactly halfway between ten and thirty. A bold decision.

And the novels still haunt me, Christ, they haunt me. The way they sit on your shelves, hauntingly, vulnerably, in helpless isolation, waiting for the man from the secondhand bookshop to give you a reasonable price for them.

In the meanwhile, put the new *Granta* neatly on the shelf with all the others. Tell yourself you're gonna damn well read the thing within the next month, okay, the next two, three years. Then forget all about it for a decade. Pull it out again in the spring — in the year 2003 — and get rid of it. Because by then we at *Granta* will have selected the next 20 Best Young British Novelists for you to put off reading for another ten years. Go for it.

June 9th Mr GLEN TILLOTSON (Bayer)
Traveller's diarrhoea
Sandwiches provided

St Mary's Hospital Medical School Staff Newsletter

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE CHANCERY DIVISION LEEDS DISTRICT REGISTRY and IN THE MATTER OF SURVIVAL GROUP LIMITED and IN THE MATTER OF THE INSOLVENCY ACT 1986

SURVIVAL GROUP LIMITED
(IN ADMINISTRATION)

Chance to win

● CONCERT promoters MCP have donated three pairs of tickets for the Princes Hall show. All you have to do is answer the following question:

With which group did Midge have his first number one hit in 1976?

Answers to: Ultravox Competition, the "News", 4, High Street, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 3SQ. The closing date is Thursday, May 6.

Trial for Andreotti?

Yet, events in the past couple of days have shown a remarkable shit, not only against him, but against the system he symbolized. *News International, Pakistan*

After answering questions, the speakers were thanked and then joined the members and guests in tea, served by Mrs Davidson and lepers. *Perthshire Advertiser*

Literary Review

Hob knobbing

The Weather in Iceland
David Profumo
(Picador, £13.99)

EVERYBODY knows the English novel is ailing. But it still comes as a surprise to find it is quite as sick as this.

David Profumo is both brainy and posh. As a reviewer, he was once the great attraction of the *Literary Review*. Since then he has turned to writing nobby columns for the Saturday *Telegraph*, about fishing and fatherhood, both of which have become rather preening. A few years ago, he also published a fearfully refained little novella called *Sea Music*, about upper-class angling in the Hebrides.

This new novel is Profumo's big shot at *littrachar*. There seemed every reason to hope it might be really rather good. That it's such a horror is perhaps indicative of something more than just a personal lapse.

The Weather in Iceland aspires to be a state of the nation novel. It's set in 1998. Richard Slide, the eighth and last Duke of London, looks back over his life, from exile in Switzerland. In Britain, there has been a military coup, after a gradual breakdown of law and order, and the royal family has been deposed. The greenhouse effect has set in sumfink dreadful, too.

The debt this scenario owes to Martin Amis's millennial fantasy, *London Fields*, is obvious; from the device of constantly referring to the apocalyptic weather, to all the little touches in the prose. When Profumo writes a phrase like "my synapses jolt, the ganglia crackle and make strange arcs" you know who he's been conning.

More than this, Profumo has absorbed the Amis line that what makes writing good is constant stylistic excess. This novel is yet another one written by Humbert Humbert, all long words and dapper combinations. When the narrator feels happy after having sex for the first time, he says: "Perhaps by some system of iatrohydraulics my cerebellum has been cleansed of accumulated jism..." When he sees his son and heir he exclaims about: "The soft lunulae of his buttocks, the nectarine soles of his feet, the startled concentration with which he filled his first, amazing nappies with inky, neonatal scoria."

Where Profumo differs from Amis is that he's high-born. He is the son of the Profumo of the Profumo affair (who, though he doesn't use it, has the title of Baron). In creating this character of the Duke of London (b. 1956), Profumo (b. 1955) has simply created a grandiose vehicle for fantasy about his own life. The Dook, as well as being a great toff, is portrayed as being dead clever too (first from Oxford, PhD from Cambridge). Hence he can be supposed to wield this tremendously hoity-toity prose style.

Dukie's life-story is wholly predictable. The great family house! The endearing eccentricities of the servants! Nanny's touching loyalty! Tough times at prep school, though! Then — Eton! Yes, bloody Eton. This is the most extended, devoted treatment of Eton seen for many years, perhaps since Cyril Connolly. Goodness, how it can mark a chap's life if he doesn't get into Pop! There's a splendid theme for the English novel, what?

Next, as for Profumo himself, comes Oxford (those dining clubs!), followed by dalliance with debs, marriage, fatherhood, and that's about it, apart from Dark Family Secrets and a lot of grumbling about the awful state of Britain these days. And of course there are a few little detached essays about intriguing subjects (remember Graham Swift and those eels?), such as the history of barbed wire and the lifecycle of the spider, to show that the outside world is jolly fascinating, too, when you really find out about it.

It is almost touching to discover that the aristocratic novel still exists, even in such a degenerate form. What really distinguishes *The Weather in Iceland*, though, is its amazing muckiness. Just as the Dook — or Profumo? — prides himself on his recherché vocab, so too he delights in esoteric sex.

It's not just wordplay, either, though there's plenty of that. Sex is hunting fur pie, night baseball, shooting the yoghurt, parking the Tonka truck in a new garage. Masturbation? "A couple of times a day I would take Rosy Palm and her five daughters on a trip to the eyelid movies, and every night without fail I would enjoy a handraised pork pie," boasts the Duke, remembering his days at Eton, "cleaving clenched Kleenex to marinated glans." There's class!

There are also a number of choicely named variants fully described. The Judgement of Solomon, for example, as performed by an Icelandic air-hostess. "She bent down and proved herself to be an even more skilled linguist than I had realized, for no sooner had I yelped into the myoclonic jolts of orgasm than she raised her mouth, leaned over my chest, and expelled a viscid stream of semen simultaneously from each of her nostrils." Just fancy!

And then there's the Wolfbag, which involves a man putting his hand down his partner's throat to make her sick as he buggers her, possibly not such jolly fun for her as for him. "I imagine it may be of Middle Eastern origin, a second cousin to the once popular practice of sodomizing a large goose and slamming its neck shut in a drawer at the *moment critique*, thus raising its body temperature and causing a similar constriction of the cloacal muscles around the root of the intruded member," observes the Duke learnedly. He also reminds would-be practitioners of "the need for proximate towels, especially if you have recently shared a Hawaiian prawn curry, Mimosa fried rice, and coconut ice-cream."

Isn't it good to find our betters can still give us a lead on something? Plenty of scope for a third *Telegraph* column here, surely.

Books & Bookmen

■ **HODDER & Stoughton were famous, or notorious, for not paying Jeffrey Archer advances, or not more than nominal advances, because the future novelist peer did not want them.**

Therefore it is unfair of Jeff to write, in a possibly apocryphal contribution to the current issue of *Hodder Hotshots Herald*, the newsletter of the Publishers' Softball League:

"Lord Archer here, but you can call me Sir. I hope all is well at Hodder; I must say I deeply regret having to move on, but I have seen the light since my first novel was published so many years ago. Indeed HarperCollins have signed up the sequel to my debut masterpiece — it's called *Well OK Give Me A Few Pennies More.* Snappy title, huh? Almost as good as *Honour Among Thieves* (working title: *No Honour Among Smug Tory Bastards*)."

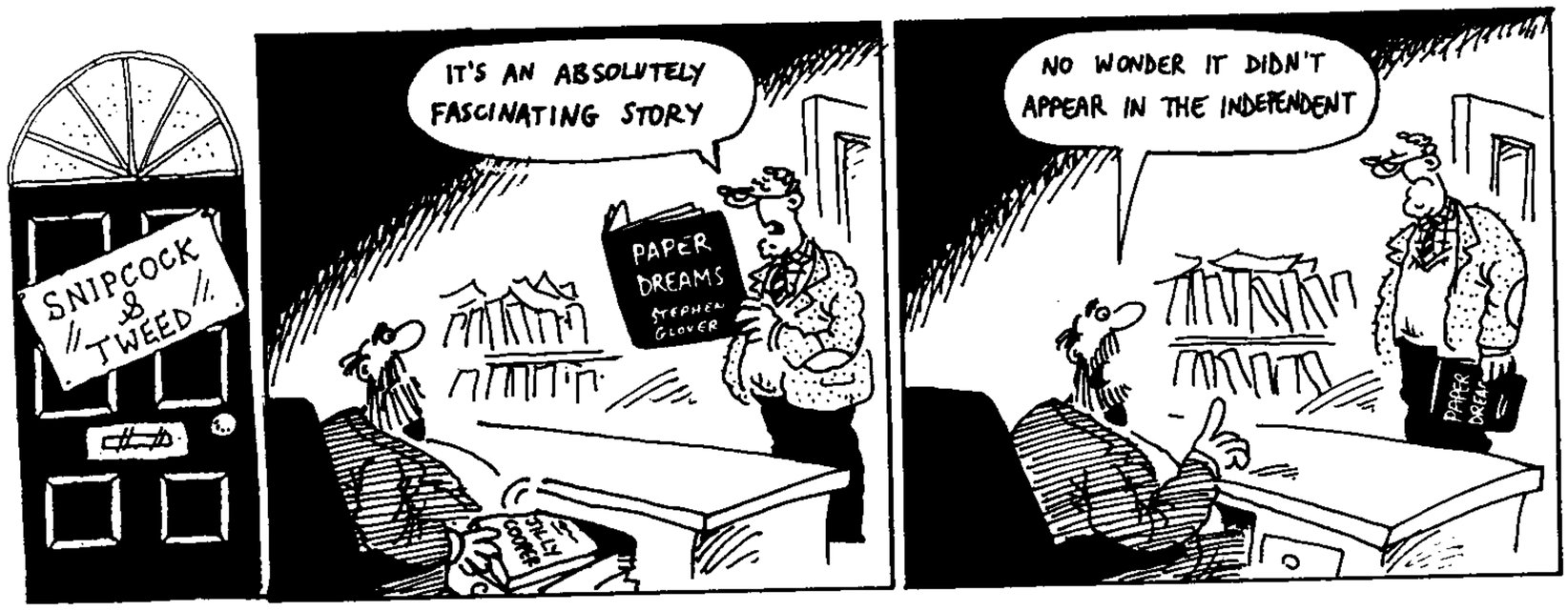
It is not known whether Richard Cohen, Jeffrey's erstwhile editor and squash partner, now ensconced back at Hodder, is a member of the firm's softball team, or even whether he contributes to the *Herald*.

Naturally enough, when they published both authors, Hodder didn't permit Archer and John Le Carré to bring out new books in the same season. Le Carré's new masterpiece, *The Night Manager*, is published on 1 July.

By the kind of coincidence that can only happen in publishing, HarperCollins are releasing Archer's *Honour Among Thieves* three days later, ensuring that one author will not occupy the top position on the bestseller lists. Both publishers are printing 100,000 copies of each book.

Hodder netted 137,000 copies in hardback of Archer's last book, *As The Crow Flies*. Thus HarperCollins, who paid £3.8 million to acquire Archer's backlist from Hodder, are up against it. Supremo Eddie Bell is using traditional medieval strong arm tactics to ensure that the nation's booksellers aren't likely to run out of stock if Jeffrey decides to descend upon their emporium. Booksellers, by way of retaliation, are insisting that the HarperCollins reps sign forms undertaking to remove every single unsold copy of the novel whenever the booksellers ask.

'Bookworm'


SNIPCOCK & TWEED
IT'S AN ABSOLUTELY FASCINATING STORY
PAPER DREAMS
STEPHEN GLOVER
NO WONDER IT DIDN'T APPEAR IN THE INDEPENDENT

footnotes

As Thatcher's children fail the education test, a Patten emerges

THE GRADGRIND GANG

THE gloriously bloody civil war between the Thatcherites which heralds the end of the Thatcher era is nowhere more conspicuous than in the row over school tests.

The Thatcher education revolution was based on two notions. First, that schoolkids are an unruly lot who need to be taught simple lessons, learning by rote, dates, grammar and all the rest of the mumbo jumbo which dates back to Mr Gradgrind in Dickens's *Hard Times*: "Now what I want is facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but facts. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else."

Secondly, that teachers are subversive and untidy, and far too many of them belong to trade unions. Taming the teachers was the priority of the first real Thatcherite education secretary after Thatcher herself, Sir Keith Joseph. He cut teachers' pay and abolished the Schools Council on the grounds that it included representatives from the teachers' unions.

After 1987, Thatcher shifted the education revolution into higher gear. The man in charge was Kenneth Baker, a willing timeserver but reluctant Thatcherite. In August 1988, on Her orders, he set up two typical Thatcher quangos: the National Curriculum Council (NCC) and the Schools Exams Assessment Council (SEAC). Then he made his big mistake: he took advice from people who knew about education.

Jewel

He appointed respected career educationalists to head the quangos — Duncan Graham (NCC); and Philip Hawsey (SEAC). They appointed other professionals. The only concession they made to Thatcher's priorities was to appoint the requisite number of industrialists. Otherwise, the only appointee to either body who could possibly be described as political was Hilary Nicolle, a former headmistress and keen Thatcherite who had become deputy director of education at Thatcher's jewel-in-the-crown council, Wandsworth.

The two bodies soon came up with proposals for a new curriculum and tests based on the principle of listening to the people who do the teaching. Many of the proposals came from a former Thatcher darling, Professor Brian Cox. To Thatcher's fury, the apostate Cox proposed that teachers should be trusted and most testing and assessment should be left to them.

This sent the prime minister into one of her routine apoplexies. She howled through the media about wimps and wets at the department of education and in the schools. In the summer of 1989 Baker was kicked upstairs and replaced by John MacGregor, who believed himself to be as right-wing as his leader.

Patten

Marenbon

Skidelsky

She was not so sure, so she buttressed him with two Young Turks. The new minister of state was Tim Eggar, a banker/stockbroker who developed a devotion to state education at Winchester and Charterhouse Petroleum. The new parliamentary under secretary was Michael Fallon, a prominent member of the "St Andrews Mafia" which helped forge Thatcherite dogma in the 1970s.

MacGregor managed to keep his two rotweilers on a leash, partly by making some remarkable appointments. To the NCC he brought in a BP executive called David Pascall. Pascall was nominated by MacGregor's old St Andrews University buddy, Bob Horton, chairman of BP. To SEAC MacGregor introduced the right wing enthusiast Janet Cohen, corporate director of Charterhouse Bank; and John Marks, an indefatigable right-wing campaigner on education who was secretary of the education group on Mrs Thatcher's favourite think tank, the Centre for Policy Studies.

Even these remarkable appointments could not save the obliging secretary of state. In November 1990, to his intense irritation, he was thrown out of the department in Thatcher's last reshuffle. His replacement, who was equally indignant about being moved (from the health ministry), was Kenneth Clarke. As ever, Clarke posed as a rationalist but behaved like the school bully.

Even though Thatcher herself was removed within days of Clarke taking office, he carried through her revolution with all the enthusiasm his predecessors could not muster. Fallon and Eggar were let off the leash. They treated officials and Baker wimps at NCC and SEAC to endless exhortations. The slightest disagreement or suggestion that teachers had to be trusted before children could properly be tested, was greeted with snorts of rage, and four-letter words, not always grammatically-linked.

Pinko

Suspect "pinkos" in the education department were eased out. John Caines, the permanent secretary, departed. Nick Stewart was shifted sideways, as was the deputy secretary responsible for teacher training, John Wiggins; so was another suspect official, Anthony Chamier. Secretary of state Clarke moved his Thatcherite education adviser Tessa Keswick into the DES to "beef up" the already intimidated officials there, and he beefed up SEAC by appointing to it his old pal John Barnes who had been vice chairman of the controlling Tory group in Kent.

On and on went the revolution. In the summer of 1991, Philip Hawsey was arbitrarily sacked from SEAC. In his place, hot from Thatcher's own policy unit, came Lord (Brian) Griffiths, a Thatcherite crusader and religious fanatic, who in the same year was appointed chairman of the Centre for Policy Studies. Also into SEAC that summer came Prof David Regan, Professor of Local Government at Nottingham University, who carried his enthusiasm for free enterprise as far as Russia, where he distributed Thatcherite tracts.

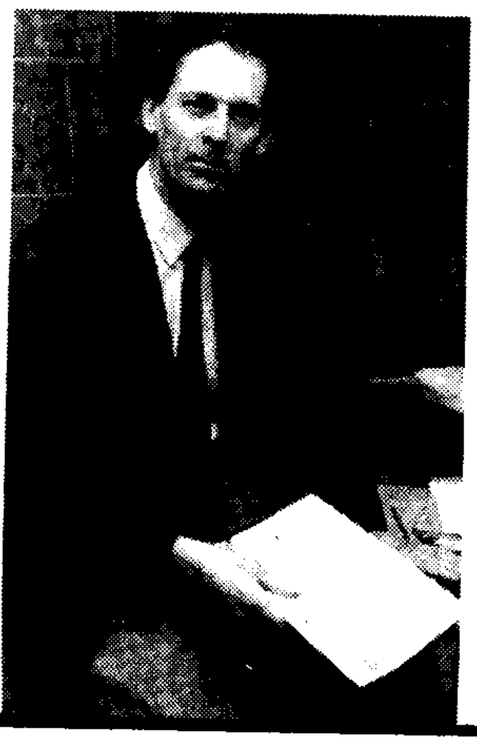
At the NCC, as he saw which way the wind was blowing, Duncan Graham resigned as chairman. Clarke re-

What the Dickens!

■ JOHN MARENBON's most striking success while chairing SEAC's English committee was the "anthology" of nostalgic English literature that 14-year-olds are now bound by law to read, learn and answer questions on.

It includes an "extract" from Dickens's David Copperfield which shocked Michael Ross, a teacher of English at Llaniltud Fawr comprehensive in South Glamorgan.

Mr Ross noticed that after the opening paragraph in which David tells Emily he loves her, no fewer than 30 paragraphs had been cut, making the second paragraph absurdly distorted. The third paragraph is cut to remove all reference to David's sorrow at leaving Emily. There then follows a piece of rotten editing, with two consecutive sentences beginning with "but". The extract ends with a crude error: the word "Ham" is printed instead of "Him", making a nonsense of what Dickens meant.



SEAC stuck by its "Ham", so Mr Ross wrote to the Dickens House Museum. The curator said he had already written to SEAC pointing out that "the overwhelming weight of evidence and scholarly judgement supports the reading 'Him' against the reading 'Ham' ". SEAC still refused to change its text.

As Mr Ross says: "No teacher would wish to read such a corrupt text. The truth is that these tests are so fundamentally flawed that taking part in them involves complicity in distortion of our literary heritage, acceptance of incompetently set questions and denial of years of experience in the way to achieve the best for all our children."

Michael Ross

placed him with David Pascall, who never lost an opportunity to bore his colleagues with homespun clichés about "plain common sense in education". Pascall was not at all embarrassed by his lack of educational experience. He gloried in it, telling his colleagues, most of whom were parents, that he "spoke for the parents". He was specially vocal about music and English, for which his qualifications were not obvious — he is a chemical engineer.

Encouraged all the way by Clarke, Griffiths and Pascall carried on Mrs Thatcher's war to the death with the teachers' unions in general and liberal ideas about testing in particular.

Ideologue

After the 1992 election, Major did a deal with the Thatcherites. If they went easy on him on Europe, he would leave them the field in education. He kept his side of the bargain — they broke theirs. The education revolution went on and on.

The new secretary of state was the ardent self-publicist John Patten. As evangelistic in his Catholicism as Griffiths and Pascall are in their religions, he at once appointed to SEAC another Catholic, John Marenbon, who teaches English at Trinity College, Cambridge.

Bow-tied Marenbon, who tries to behave like something out of *Brideshead Revisited*, is almost as ridiculously right-wing as his wife, Sheila Lawlor, deputy director of the Centre for Policy Studies. Patten also appointed Prof Lord Skidelsky, a moderate Thatcherite and former SDP member, who has suffered all his life under the contradictory influences of his two heroes, Sir Oswald Mosley and Lord Keynes.

Other sensitive appointments to SEAC and NCC were Anthony Peligrini, head teacher of the Cardinal Vaughan Catholic school, who is as keen on his religion as is John Burn, headmaster of Long Benton Community School Newcastle, whom Patten appointed to the NCC.

Hot gospellers

Almost as soon as the motley band of hot gospellers and Centre for Policy Studies fanatics were safe in office, it started to disintegrate. It was not just that the pinko unions at last got their own back by boycotting tests. The sudden realisation that millions of children were to become the victims of such an unrepresentative and obsessive minority burst into a vast popular rage. The rage was stoked up by the arrival this month of the half-baked and ridiculous new proposals for tests in English.

Unable to stand the heat, the ideologues fell out. Skidelsky resigned because SEAC was too right wing. Marenbon resigned because SEAC was too left wing. Both think Patten should resign. Pascall, who was absolutely certain he was to be the head of the new quango, SCAA, which will replace SEAC and the NCC, discovered to his horror one morning that the new chairman was a boring, middle-of-the-road civil servant called Sir Ron Dearing, a personal friend of the present permanent secretary at the DES, Geoffrey Holland. Pascall sulked off, hopefully to the City, and the whole edifice of evangelistic reactionary claptrap collapsed.

The yelps of outraged anguish from beneath the wreckage are the sweetest sounds for years.

TODAY IN PARLIAMENT

Hillsdown Holdings

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what services have been provided to Ministers or their officials by Hillsdown Holdings or any of its related companies in the last five years.

Mr. Curry: The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is the sponsoring Department for the food and drink industry. It is therefore necessary for Ministers and officials to have contacts with a very wide range of companies in that sector, including Hillsdown Holdings.

8th March

NB: Mr David Curry, who obviously has some difficulty in understanding a question let alone answering it, is Minister of State at the Ministry of Agriculture.

Guinness: time for the DTI to stop MIMsying about

■ A TERRIFIC hullabaloo blows up at the department of trade and industry every time someone threatens to publish its report into the Guiness scandal.

The report has been rotting on the DTI's shelves for a long time now, but whenever anyone threatens to leak its contents, the DTI gets an injunction to enforce silence.

Until recently, it has had good reason: the Guinness trials, it says, are running, and if the report were published it might prejudice the defendants. (The DTI wasn't so squeamish over its report on County Natwest, but that's another matter).

Now, with the acquittal of Thomas Ward, the Guinness trials are over. So isn't it time the report was published?

There are lots of urgent questions it might answer. For instance, why did MIM, an investment company, sell £25 million worth of Guinness shares at a key stage in the latter's bid for Distillers? So huge was the sale that it imperilled the whole future of MIM.

The Eye hasn't seen a copy of the report, so cannot say whether it deals at length with this remarkable event. If it does, the report would be bound to receive extensive publicity in the Daily Express and the Daily Star, both of which are owned by Lord Stevens. At the time of the share sale, he was chairman of MIM.

THE THINGS THEY WRITE

"May, my milklady, offered to pick and arrange the flowers. An organist friend from Somerset agreed to play on condition that ours would only be a small family wedding. So I just asked 36 family members — and 350 mainly constituency friends."

Emma Nicholson, Tory MP for Devon West and Torridge, writing in the Evening Standard, 28 April.

The Curse of Aitken

A MIGHTY groan went up throughout the Swan Hunter shipyard on Tyneside when they heard that Jonathan Aitken, the debonair minister for defence procurement, was to make an official visit to the yard.

Perhaps he would cancel at the last minute? No such luck.

On 5 March he arrived, beautifully-dressed and accompanied by one of the few Tory MPs in the area, Neville Trotter. The minister was grinning and full of the sort of jokes he knows the workers enjoy.

When asked about the order for a helicopter carrier, crucial to the yard's future, he replied gaily that it had definitely not been cancelled.

Worse was to come. In the Commons on 9 March he warmly responded to some vigorous arslikhan from Trotter. "I can confirm," he drawled, "that I was extremely impressed by the quality of the workmanship and the dedication of the workforce."

There was no escape. Two months later, on 11 May, the helicopter carrier contract went elsewhere and it was time for the receivers.

CAN YOU HELP?

● Two fascinating questions keep coming in.

Was Frank Beck, the Leicestershire child abuser, a freemason? And were any of the police or council officers who investigated him freemasons?

Apparently, any member of the lodge at Syston, Leicestershire, can help with an answer.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 071 287 3183

In the City

POLLY PECK SPECIAL

WITH ASIL NADIR safely sunning himself in northern Cyprus — a move which should have come as no surprise to *Eye* readers — attention has turned away from significant events nearer home in the weeks before and since he fled.

Take Scotland Yard's investigation into the supposed plot to bribe the trial judge, Mr Justice Tucker. Police investigations into the suggested plot — which the press "discovered" long after the alleged £3.5 million pay-off agreement had been detailed here — continue, focused mainly on Wendy Wiltshire, a business associate of Nadir's, and her friend Francis, a London man with small-time form.

Both, it is believed, have been interviewed by the police. The agreement regarding payment of the money, held in a Swiss bank account, for an unspecified purpose, later suggested as fixing the trial so that Asil was acquitted, was signed by Wiltshire and Bilge Nevzat, Nadir's sister. Unlike the rest of Nadir's little helpers, Wiltshire and friend are not now hiding in extradition-free northern Cyprus; but whether they will be any more informative with Asil gone remains to be seen.

Meanwhile this little documentary problem will no doubt exercise the mind of the magistrate who must consider any question of giving back to Nadir his passport and freedom to travel. It would be very upsetting if a situation arose similar to that with BCCI's founder Agha Hasan Abedi, sitting safely in Pakistan which refuses to extradite him. Any such request for Nadir could not even be made to Northern Cyprus and could hardly effectively be made to either Cyprus or Turkey, the past and present owners.

Eye 776, 13 September 1991

Although everyone dismisses the alleged plot, this did not prevent Nadir's legal team from using the unfounded allegations against Tucker to have him removed from the trial when he refused to step down. Nadir's QC, Anthony Scrivener, and his lawyers, Pannone & Partners, only stopped attempts to seek a new judge when the divisional court refused to intervene just before Easter. Doubtless their belief in the innocence of their client was reinforced by his jumping bail.

Of course for the Nadir camp the plot was a "heads I win, tails you lose" play. If Tucker had stepped down or been forced to do so then the trial date would have gone back to next year as a new judge would have needed time to review previous Tucker rulings, if not start all over again. So much for Nadir's claims from his Cyprus refuge about justice denied. If Tucker refused to go — quite rightly as he was not involved — there was a wonderful ground for a mistrial.

Those with knowledge of the police investigation have always favoured the view that far from any real plot, the intention was either to destabilise the trial process with a phoney plot or to rip off Nadir by taking money upfront for promising to fix the trial but never intending to perform.

Then there is the matter of Nadir's friend and business associate Ramadan Guney and his £1 million bail surety. This is at risk following Asil's escape.

Consider the facts. In the week before Nadir jumped bail, Guney was in northern Cyprus and saw Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash. Soon after returning he began moves to withdraw as a surety — on health grounds, and not because he thought Nadir was to going to flee. But Guney halted this move, despite a court hearing being scheduled; and during this time he spoke to Nadir by telephone.

Over the weekend prior to Nadir's departure, Guney inspired an anonymous late night telephone tip to the serious farce office (SFO) that Nadir was going to run. On the bank holiday Monday, Nadir reported as usual at Saville Row police station. The police surveillance was stood down, viewing the tip-off as yet another false alarm. That evening Guney and Nadir spoke again. Within 24 hours Nadir was gone. Shortly afterwards Guney was taken to hospital with suspected heart problems.

No doubt at the court hearing set for 15 June Guney will quite rightly claim that he should not lose his £1 million as he tried to remove himself as a surety and warned the authorities who let Nadir slip through their incompetent fingers. Ramadan was as shocked as anyone when his friend Asil fled leaving him £1 million in the hole.

But the court will perhaps want to know why he did not persist with the bail hearing he had requested and why he did not personally contact the SFO and inform it of his fears which so quickly became fact. The court may also wish to inquire into exactly why Guney was so sure that Nadir was going to go and whether he discussed that possibility with Nadir. It could also seek an explanation of exactly what Nadir meant when he informed his faithful mouthpiece, the *Daily Mail*. "I do not think anybody is going to suffer hardship from my arrival here." Surely not that those Turkish banks, who put up £2 million, and his ex-wife, who provided £500,000, not to mention Guney will be recompensed?

There will doubtless be perfectly proper and credible answers to these and other questions to remove any doubt that Guney should keep his £1 million.

stockbroker Davies is still understood to be in Switzerland, while Forsyth now spends most of her time in Northern Cyprus where the rumours are that Asil will be returning soon.

Just why that should be so, given his bail restrictions, is less than clear — especially as Britain has no extradition treaty with a state it does not recognise.

Eye 794, 22 May 1992

Had there been a bail hearing over Guney's wish to withdraw, then Nadir could have been in difficulties. Another £1 million friend would have had to be found if he was to stay out of custody. Such friends might have proved hard to find. Similarly at such a hearing the SFO would have been likely to raise the implications of the alleged bribe plot and evidence that Nadir was controlling and realising assets in breach of his bankruptcy order. All these matters could have persuaded the magistrate that Nadir was safer in jail with the trial only four months away and an extradition free bolt hole available. Once in custody it might have been difficult to get out, which would have scuppered Nadir's always expected plan to exit either before or during the trial.

All of which could explain why Nadir finally decided to make a move he had been rehearsing for so long. And at such a time that his friend Guney would not be financially penalised as he had done everything to alert the authorities.

Finally there is the return to the Nadir faith of long-time believer, *Daily Mail* deputy City editor Michael Walters. "I am a friend and admirer of Nadir," Walters admitted in November 1989. No surprise: from 1987 until the end in 1990 Walters boosted Polly Peck shares, forecasting that the price could reach 950p just before they crashed to nothing. Shortly afterwards Walters was forced into an apology to save the *Mail*'s face.

But that was soon forgotten and forgiven, and he remained available to assist his hero. Witness the story, first published by the *Mail* in 1991, that Nadir had contributed £1.5 million to the Conservative party. So far only £440,000 has been proved but it made the point — the government should be wary.

EVENTS BEHIND the scenes at the Polly Peck trial grow curiouser and curiouser as the investigation by Scotland Yard continues into the remarkable allegation of an attempt to influence the outcome of the trial by bribing the judge.

So far, not surprisingly, the Yard's Serious Crimes Squad has found no[illegible] slightest [illegible]nce to suggest

Eye 819, 7 May 1993

And so once safe in his Cyprus sanctuary, Nadir again turned to the ever obliging Walters to provide a platform for his propaganda about persecution and injustice. Needless to say the first newspaper to get the Asil exclusive was the *Daily Mail* (7 May). However, even this "scoop" did not prevent a substantial toning down of Walters's gushing prose. But Walters's role did not end there. During an extended stay on the island others observed him advising Nadir when he faced the baying hacks.

So what will happen now? What is not going to happen is that Nadir will voluntarily return to Britain to face trial. He was never guilty of crimes requiring courage and never intended to risk doing years in a British jail.

But will he be able to remain in the tiny backwater of northern Cyprus indefinitely? Nadir is already a growing embarrassment to his protector Denktash and his patron, Turkey's prime minister-turned-president Suleyman Demirel. Denktash is under pressure over Nadir's presence, but it is politically impossible to give him up. Turkey, with her international ambitions and needs, is unlikely to want to give Nadir shelter, but equally can hardly surrender him. Nadir may also have too many markers on politicians in both countries to be easily sacrificed. For both governments Nadir could soon represent an unwelcome destabilising force.

If Nadir persists in a high profile (unlike Ugandan dictator Idi Amin, who was sheltered by Saudi Arabia which demanded silence as its price for sanctuary), such as suggesting he might become president and promising to take back the Polly Peck farms in both countries, he could become a threat.

In those circumstances travel outside northern Cyprus could become very risky — the reason American fugitive Marc Rich does not leave Switzerland for fear that he might "inadvertently" land in a country where Uncle Sam could grab him. Or there might be an unfortunate accident — a car bomb or a mid-air explosion — which could readily be blamed on the hated Greek Cypriots and after the appropriate state funeral and crocodile tributes it could be back to politics and business as usual.

READERS of the soon to be not *Independent* at all have now had three months of the investment wisdom of its tainted tipster "Changi Jim" Slater. So how is he doing? Perhaps not surprisingly, the already not so *Independent* has failed to tell them — so let the *Eye* reveal the bad news.

Since February Slater has tipped six shares. These were:

Amersham International (18 Feb) at 695p — the shares are now 668p. Sage (18 March) at 567p — now 583p. Motor World (1 April) at 257p — now 273p. Ingham (15 April) at 109p — now 130p. Tepnel Diagnostics (29 April) at 229p — now 233p. British Data Management (6 May) at 223p — now 235p.

Despite the disappointment of Amersham, the Slater tips appear to show a rise of just over 5 percent during a period when the FT-100 index is up just 1 percent. But that performance assumes, most unlikely, that the *Independent* reader would be able to deal at the price Slater recommended. Market makers read too, and so the shares were always marked up ahead of any buyers and ended the first day well beyond the Slater price.

So what happens if that closing price after Slater wrote up the shares, a more realistic buying level, is taken. The result, predictably sad to say, is very different:

Amersham — down from 716p to 668p. Sage — down 601p to 583p. Motor World — down 277p to 273p. Ingham — up 116p to 130p. Tepnel — down 245p to 233p. BDM — up 232.5p to 235p.

Now the Slater portfolio shows a loss of 0.5 percent: £1,000 in each share would have produced a loss of £28 not a £315 profit — and that is before dealing costs! Some guru!

Not of course that "Changi Jim" will have done so badly. Because he does not have to reveal which shares he owns and at what price he bought, only the guru knows. But Jim was more likely to be in lower down. He admitted to "an interest" in Amersham and to buying "some shares last year" in Ingham. He had also previously written up Sage and BDM in his book *The Zulu Principle*, which was published last October. He had previously bought some 400,000 BDM on their way up from 125p. How many Sage he bought is not yet known.

"Cash is trash" is one of the mottos of *The Zulu Principle*, which is supposed to show how to make "extraordinary profits from ordinary shares". After three months of the stock market guru, *Independent* readers may not be so sure, even if editor Andreas Whittam Strobes tells people he is very pleased with the Slater column. But then as business editor Christopher Huhne knows only too well from his intimate knowledge of the currency markets, prices can all too often and unexpectedly go down rather than up, resulting in losses for the ill-informed.

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Maeve Binchy,
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THANKS AGAIN G. GIRO.

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GGWWF.

SPEECHWRITING — see MITCH MURRAY, Eye Help.

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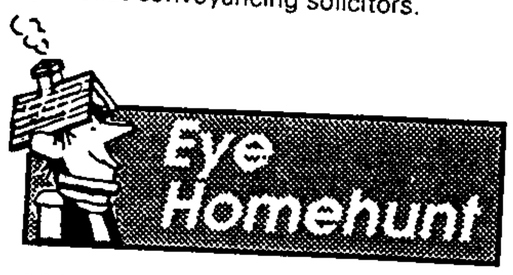

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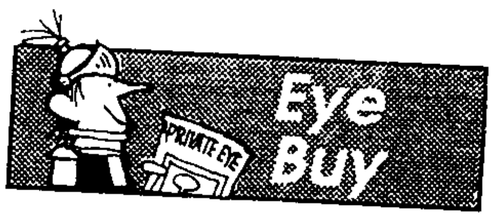

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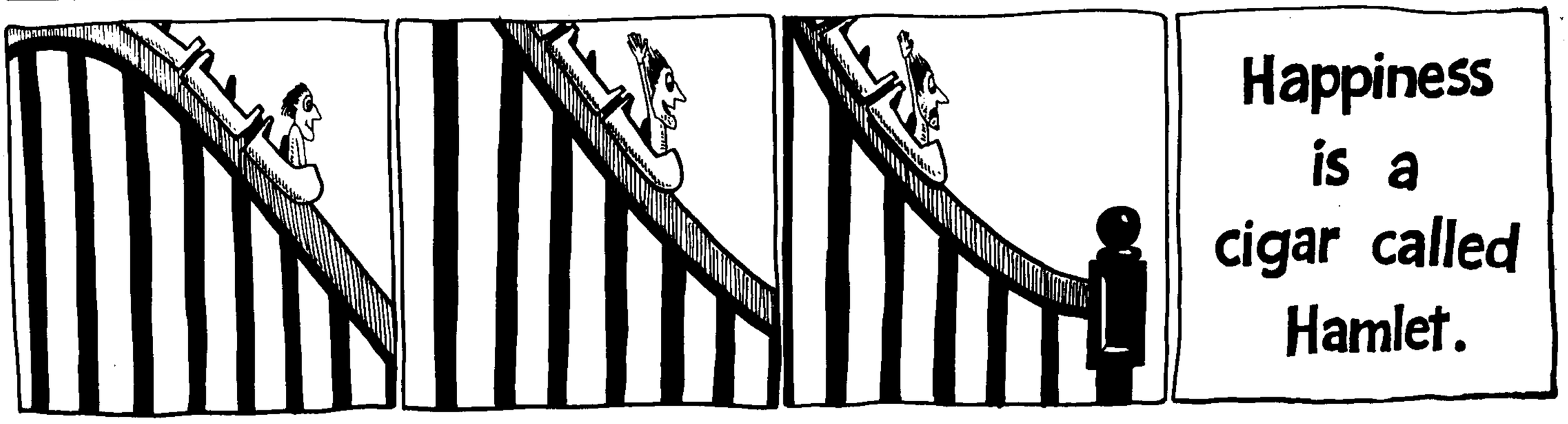

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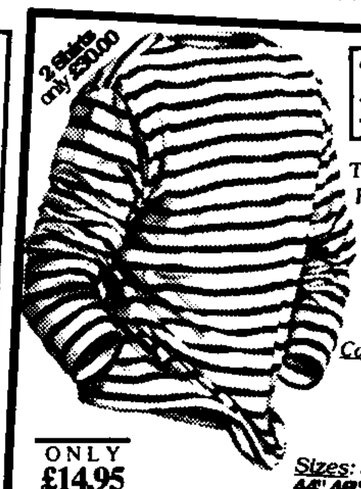

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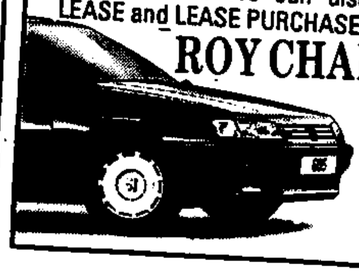

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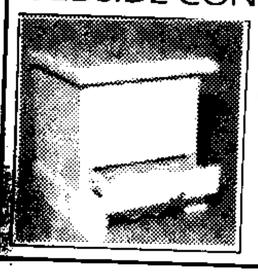

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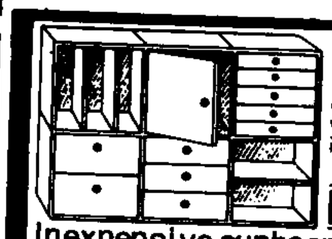

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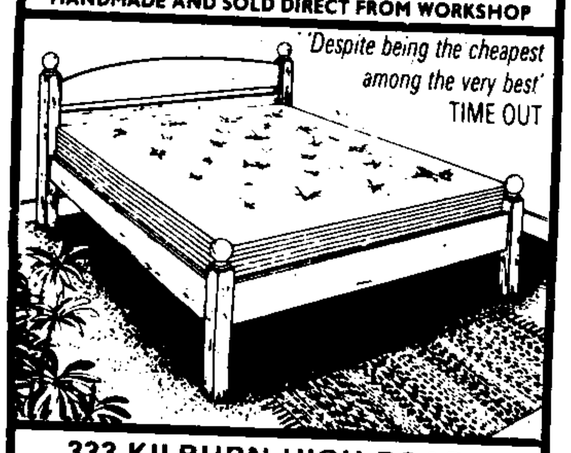

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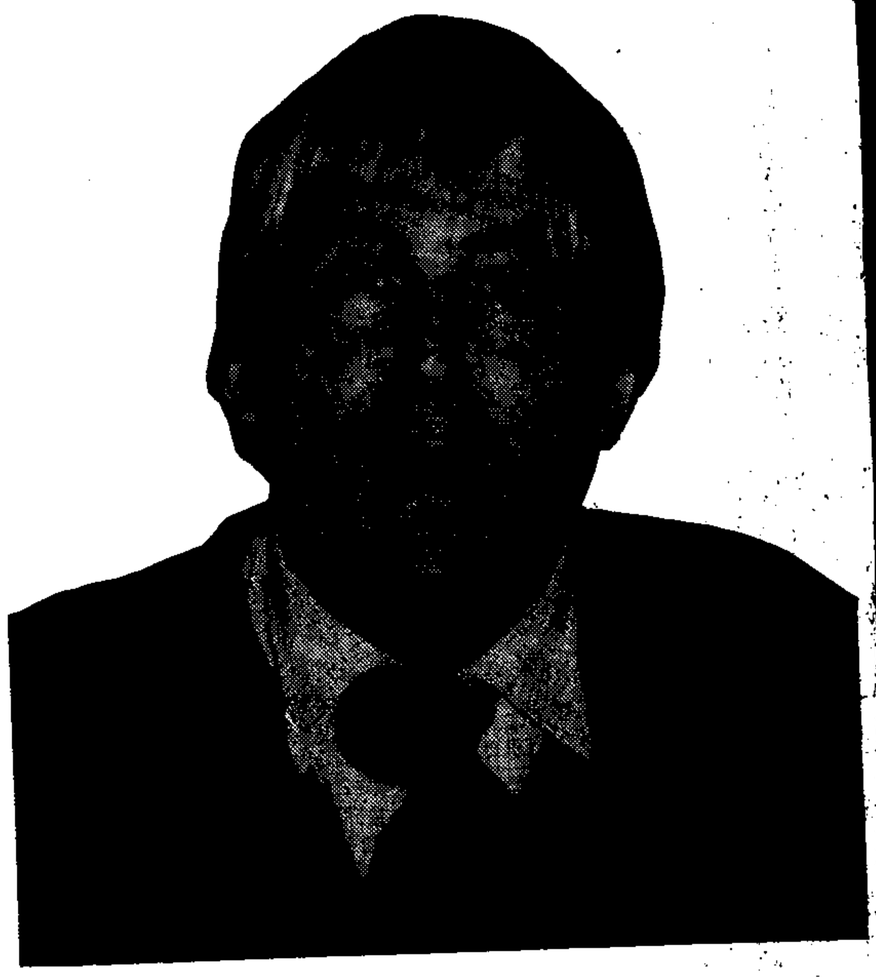

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